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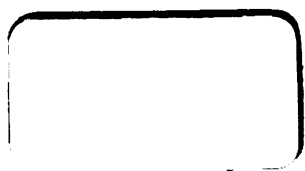
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JAMES BRATTIE, LL.D.

(Reproduced from the mezzotint engraving of 1775 of Sir Joshua Reynolds's allegorical picture of Brattie, which now hangs in Marischal College, Aberdeen.)

BEATTIE AND HIS FRIENDS

BY
MARGARET FORBES

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PREFACE.

DR. BEATTIE's papers and the picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds were originally left to his niece, Miss Valentine, and her husband, Mr. Glennie, and afterwards passed into the hands of their two daughters, the Misses Glennie, of Galleries, Aberdeen. The picture was left by them to the University of Aberdeen, and the papers to the charge of their three nieces, Miss Knight and the Misses Margaret and Mary Forbes. These decided that Miss Margaret Forbes should examine the papers and see if there were anything in them of interest to the public more than had been given by Sir William Forbes in his "Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D.," written immediately after Beattie's death, and published in 1806. On examination, she thought that a fuller account of his "Life and Friends" might be found interesting, especially in view of the centenary of his death. The volume now published is the result of her labours. She has refrained as far as possible from reproducing letters which appear in the Life by Sir William Forbes.

Miss Margaret Forbes died on January 15th, 1903. The survivors have not felt themselves at liberty to make any substantial alteration in her manuscript, which was carefully written out and revised by herself with a view to publication. They commend the work to the public as throwing much fresh light on the life, work, and influence of an eminent Scotsman—one of the most notable personalities of the latter half of the eighteenth century. The book also conveys incidentally much interesting information, on contemporary authority, regarding many distinguished personages of Beattie's time, including King George III., Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Garrick, Edmund Burke, Bishop Porteus, Wilberforce, Lord Kaimes, Principal George Campbell, the Duchess of Gordon, Mrs. Montagu, Hannah More, and others.

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Grateful acknowledgments are due to Professor Davidson, LL.D., and Professor Cowan, D.D., of Aberdeen University, and to Mr. Robert S. Rait, Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford, for counsel in the undertaking and for revision of proofs; also to Professor Norman Macpherson, of Edinburgh University, whose investigations in the Advocates' Library and elsewhere have thrown light on several points in the narrative that would otherwise have remained obscure.

MARGARET KNIGHT.

MARY FORBES.

FRESHFIELD, CULTS, ABERDEEN.

December, 1903.

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BEATTIE AND HIS FRIENDS.

1735—1758.

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CHAPTER I.

BOY-POET AND SCHOOLMASTER.

Early Life and Education at Laurencekirk—Parish School, and Marischal College, Aberdeen, 1735–1753—Schoolmaster at Fordoun—Appointment as one of the Masters of the Grammar School, Aberdeen, 1753–1758.

ON the outskirts of what is now the thriving town of Laurencekirk, in Kincardineshire, stands a substantial two-storied farm-house, separated from the town by a little dell through which a small stream flows. Behind this house, there is a long low building now used as a cow-house, which was the original farm-house. Low as the building at present looks, it bears the mark of having had its walls heightened : at first it must have been a very humble dwelling. It was probably not more so, however, than the ordinary farm-house of its day, and it was superior to the houses in the adjacent little village, which, until enlarged and improved by Lord Gardenstown, many years later, was a mere clay hamlet with about fifty-four inhabitants.

The view from the present farm-house is obstructed by the large inn which Lord Gardenstown built on the opposite side of the dell;¹ but the old ivy-mantled dwelling, standing on a rising ground, commanded an uninterrupted view of the wide expanse of the "Howe of the Mearns," with its magnificent background of the Grampians. Farther down the stream, on the other side from the farm-buildings, rose

"The breezy hill that skirts the down,"²

on which the village church had stood for centuries, and round which the "village forefathers" sleep in the quiet graveyard.

¹ This dell, with its grassy slopes and clear stream fringed by the wild rose, was the favourite haunt of the children of the farm-house in their play-hours, and Beattie in after life never passed through Laurencekirk without visiting it.

² The "Minstrel," Book 2, stanza 17. Beattie in after years quoted this line as solely applying to the churchyard of St. Fergus, near Peterhead ; but it would appear as if the memory of the churchyard at Laurencekirk had suggested the line in the further description of the spot in which he would choose to be buried, "Fast by a brook or fountain's murmuring wave," there being no brook near St. Fergus.

In this old farm-house, on the 25th of October, 1735, James Beattie, the author of the "Minstrel," was born. His father belonged to a family of Beatties who had been settled for some generations as farmers in Kincardineshire, and were believed to be an off-shoot of the Beatons of Skye. There were several branches of the family in the neighbourhood of Laurencekirk, some more, some less prosperous, so that they were in the way of classifying themselves as the "rich Beatties" and the "poor Beatties." Probably, it was to the latter of these classes that the poet's father belonged; for, when he moved from the farm of Mill of Haulkerton to Borrowmuirhills, where James was born, he took advantage of his vicinity to Laurencekirk, and opened a shop to supply the wants of the villagers, with the view of increasing his means of providing for his young family.

This elder James Beattie was much respected by his neighbours as a man of superior intelligence and knowledge acquired by reading, as well as of strict integrity. We also know from the account his son gives of his early instructions,¹ that he was a man of true piety, and that his house was such as Burns described in his "Cotter's Saturday Night," from which "Old Scotia's grandeur springs." If any inheritance of poetical talent came to James, it was from his father, who in his leisure hours used to attempt to write verses; and from his example Beattie must also have learned his diligent use of time.² He was early deprived, however, of the instructions of this good father, who died when James was but seven years old.

His mother's name was Jean Watson, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, connected by descent with the families of Erskine of Dun, and Lawson of Boghill. She was a woman of uncommon abilities, and after her husband's death, with the assistance of her elder son, David, a youth of eighteen, she continued to manage both the farm and the shop, and to bring up her family in comfort. Of her six children, two sons and four daughters, David was the eldest, and James the youngest. It had been a cherished wish of his father's, that David, who was a lad of good ability, should go to college, and the hope of his being able to send him there had not been abandoned at the time of his death. Then, however, David unselfishly gave up all idea of prosecuting his own studies, and devoted all his energies to helping his widowed mother, and caring for his brother and sisters.

James was a delicate boy, and from his childhood was subject to headache, from which he suffered all his life. On being sent to school, he very early showed not only talent, but that unwearied

¹ The "Minstrel," Book 1, stanzas 27, 28, 29. Beattie acknowledged that in Edwin he reproduced his own early experiences.

² Beattie was perhaps scarcely old enough to have himself remarked this trait in his father's character, but the memory of it was kept alive in the family, as they carefully preserved their father's journal, in which an exact account of how his time had been spent was kept.

application to study, and that sense of duty, for which he was distinguished through life. He must also, from the first, have had something of that charm, and loveliness of disposition, which afterwards won for him so many friends. One of his sisters¹ was so devoted to him that she prolonged her schooldays, not only that she might accompany and watch over her delicate younger brother, but also that she might learn Latin in order to help him in the preparation of his lessons.

The parish school of Laurencekirk, where Beattie was educated until he went to college, had forty years previously been taught by the distinguished grammarian Dr. Ruddiman. Beattie's account of his own schoolmaster, Mr. Milne, was, "He was a good grammarian and tolerably skilled in the Latin language, but destitute of taste as well as of some other qualifications essential to a good teacher."

For other culture he was much indebted to the parish minister, who, as was the habit of the Scottish clergy, watched over and encouraged the promising boys attending the parish school. Mr. Thomson was himself a diligent student, as well as a good preacher; and his library was open to young Beattie. It was long remembered in the parish, after Beattie became a well-known man, what pains and pleasure Mr. Thomson took in helping him in his studies; while Beattie, on his part, never forgot what he owed to his minister, always speaking of him with great respect, and specially acknowledging his obligations to him for the use of books.

Ogilby's translation of "Virgil" was the first book of verse that Beattie read. How soon he began to write verses himself is not recorded, but, as among his school-fellows he went by the name of "the poet," it must have been his habit from an early age. Music was seemingly the common heritage of his family: they were all noted for their correct ear. David and James both played the violin and also sang.

Beyond Laurencekirk and its immediate neighbourhood the boy probably saw little, till his eldest sister married, and settled in Montrose, where he occasionally visited her. His first sight of the sea, he used to say, was from the top of a hill near Fordoun, and the vivid impression was never effaced from his mind. But at Montrose he had the earliest opportunity of musing on the "sounding shore."² Here, too, he must have heard something of the stirring events of the Rebellion of "Forty-five"; for Mr. Valentine, his sister's husband, was a ship-master,³ who was in the Moray Firth with his vessel while the battle of Culloden was being fought, and heard the firing of the guns.

No record of the impressions made upon the boy by these novel

¹ Elisabeth, who died early.

² The "Minstrel," Book I., stanza 54.

³ He commanded an "East Indiaman," and made several voyages to China.

scenes and events has come down to us; but his sister, Mrs. Valentine, frequently heard him pacing his room at night, and, on inquiry, found he had been thinking out and writing down some poetical thought which had struck him after going to bed.

Till he was fourteen, Beattie continued his studies at the parish school—with what result we learn from Mr. Bower's biography of him published a year after his death. He says, "At a very early period of life Beattie was distinguished among his fellow scholars, not only by the superiority of his powers, but by his indefatigable application. He was always in the highest station of his class. Diligent, attentive, and regular in accomplishing the work prescribed to him, his reputation within the small circle of his friends began to extend." Such a boy, in Scotland, however poor his parents, has almost invariably found his way to the university. Parents, schoolmasters, and clergymen, all were equally anxious to give boys of ability this advantage, and the bursaries attached to the university put it within the power of even the poorest to gain for themselves the means of livelihood, though often scanty enough, during the years of study.

In 1749, when Beattie had just completed his fourteenth year, he was considered sufficiently advanced in his studies to go to college. Accordingly, his brother and he set out in the end of autumn for Aberdeen, where James was to try for a bursary at Marischal College. The journey of thirty miles, so easily accomplished nowadays, was rather an undertaking, at a time when roads were bad, more especially in the short, dark days. The brothers' mode of conveyance was primitive—they rode on one horse! At Stonehaven, midway to Aberdeen, they stopped for the night, and were much amused by their host, one Peter Logie, who, with a good deal of general information, was famed for his loquacity. On him Beattie composed a song, which shows that a habit he long maintained, of turning into verse any little incident that interested him for the amusement of his friends, had already been formed.

Bursaries at this time were gained simply by competition in Latin composition. David Beattie was astonished to see his brother return very early from the trial, and was afraid he had not bestowed sufficient time or pains on the paper, on which his future so much depended. He was relieved next day on hearing James's name called first on the roll, as gainer of the highest bursary.

David arranged that his brother should board during the winter in the house of a distant relative, Mr. David Langlands, and then, bidding him farewell, set out on his return home. They parted on the "Green," an open space, presumably at one time covered with grass, out of which ran the Hardgate, a long, narrow street, by which the town was entered from the south before Union Street was

laid out in the beginning of last century. David used often in after years to tell how, after he had gone some little distance, he looked back and saw James still standing in the middle of the street where they parted, looking after him. His heart smote him on looking at the delicate boy, and he said to himself, "How can I leave such a poor creature in Aberdeen for the winter? he cannot surely survive that period." His fears fortunately proved groundless: James's health did not get worse, and he was able for the work of the session.

The first professor under whom he studied was Dr. Blackwell, Principal of the college and Professor of Greek. He was a man of some note, and author of several works, including "An Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer," and he is said to have revived the study of Greek literature in the North of Scotland. He recognized the ability of his young student, and, much to the country boy's astonishment, singled him out for special attention. In after years, Beattie used to give a graphic picture of his old professor to his friends, describing his portly mien, and the dignified manner in which he walked through the students assembled in the public school, attired in a loose kind of morning undress, and with shoes in the fashion of Queen Anne's time. But he also never forgot to acknowledge how much he personally owed to him, and always said Dr. Blackwell was the first person who gave him reason to believe that he was possessed of any genius.

At the close of the session, in the spring of 1750, the following announcement appeared in the *Aberdeen Journal* of April 3rd: "The same day the premium given by Principal Blackwell towards the end of the session to the best scholar of his first class was, after a severe trial, adjudged to James Beattie, Laurencekirk. The trial was an analysis of part of the fourth book of the "Odyssey," and the students were close looked up while they wrote it."¹

Beattie returned to Laurencekirk and spent the summer in preparation for the next session, in which he was assisted by his old schoolmaster, Mr. Milne.

Thus passed the three following years—the five months from November to March of college session at Aberdeen, the rest of the year at home in preparation for the succeeding winter's work. In all his studies he took deep interest, except in mathematics, which he disliked, and to which he only gave sufficient attention to prepare the prescribed work of the class. In other subjects this never satisfied him, he read widely and studied deeply and far too continuously for his health. Music was the only relaxation he allowed himself. He must have felt that he had injured his health by such close study,

¹ The premium was a Greek Grammar, very handsomely bound, with an inscription written by the Principal himself in fine, bold characters. The book is in the possession of Beattie's great-grandnieces, the Misses Forbes.

as in after years he earnestly dissuaded his son from following his example in this respect.

During his fourth year, he studied under Dr. Alexander Gerard, author of the "Essay on Taste," whom he afterwards succeeded as Professor of Moral Philosophy, when Dr. Gerard became Professor of Divinity. What impression young Beattie left of himself on his fellow students during his college career, we again learn from Mr. Bower, who writes: "I have conversed with several of Beattie's class fellows. They unanimously affirm that he was considered superior to any of his class."

Having thus passed through the Arts Classes, he obtained the degree of M.A. in the spring of 1753, and, his general education being now finished, he had to select his profession. The Church was usually the goal of a young man's ambition in Beattie's circumstances, and indeed presented almost the only opening for the educated men in his class. So he determined to study Divinity; literary work, however, was his true bent, and fortunately his lot was so ordered that he was able to follow his inclination. Meanwhile, his great desire was to relieve his mother and brother of the burden of supporting him, which they had so long and cheerfully borne. With this view he applied for the post of parish schoolmaster in the village of Fordoun, about six miles from Laureneekirk, and obtained it, entering on his duties there on the 1st of August, 1753. The parish schoolmaster, in those days, had also to act as precentor in the church.

Here he taught the greater part of the year, but went into Aberdeen to attend the Divinity classes for a short time in winter.¹

Of Beattie's Divinity studies all we know is that he attended the lectures of Dr. Robert Pollock in Marischal College, and of Professor John Lumsden in King's College; the Divinity Halls being practically united, inasmuch as the students attended the lectures in both. On one occasion, Beattie had, as was the custom, to deliver a discourse

¹ This was a very usual practice at that time, and for more than a century afterwards. But for this, in a poor country like Scotland it would have been very difficult for many young men to support themselves during the eight years of university training—four in Arts and four in Divinity—which were required before they could be licensed as clergymen. In order that their absence from school duties might be as short as possible, schoolmaster-students were allowed to take one whole session and four partial sessions of the Divinity course. Those taking partial sessions did not join the classes until about the middle of the session. The disadvantage to their scholars of such temporary absence (their place for the time being supplied by another) was amply made up to them by the master having had the advantage of a university training. It was this that made the parish schools in the north of Scotland the feeders of the university, each school possessing a teacher fully qualified to prepare the boys to study there. This also was one of the causes of the superior education of the people of Scotland. Clever young men gladly gave their youthful strength and ardour to teaching in the remote parishes, when they could regard the school as the stepping-stone to the church and manse.

before the Professor and his fellow-students. It was much commended, but some of the audience remarked that he spoke poetry in prose.

Beattie's life as schoolmaster at Fordoun must have been distasteful to him in some respects. The drudgery of teaching young children, the want of congenial society, and of easy access to books which his very small salary would not permit of his buying, must have been keenly felt by a young man of his social and literary turn; but he wisely made the best of the situation, and, during the five years of obscurity which he passed there, continued the work of preparation for future usefulness. He was still a close student of the classics, particularly of the poets. A bulky manuscript, containing copious notes on the "Iliad," and the number of days he had spent on the study of each book, was found among his papers, and shows how thorough his work was. In after years, he used to say that it was from this careful reading of Homer he first obtained a proper conception of the true nature of epic poetry. But he did not confine his reading to the Greek and Latin poets: he studied both French and Italian literature; and some of the Italian classics, from the notes that he left on them, must have been read as carefully as Homer. These literary studies to which his own tastes impelled him and the reading preparatory for the Divinity classes that he attended in winter, indicate many hours of labour, besides the daily teaching in school; but Beattie found time for yet another study, still more necessary to his temperament and also to his future work. This was the study of Nature. It was at Fordoun that he laid up the store of poetic images drawn from the sights and sounds of Nature which we find in his poems.

The character of the scenery by which he was surrounded there, though neither so grand nor so beautiful as may be met with in some other parts of Scotland, yet combines both those elements; and the variety of images that this combination affords makes it indeed a "Meet nurse for a poetic child." Often, we are told, Beattie wandered during the whole of the short summer night on Strathfinella Hill, from the top of which at dawn he could see the sun rise from the German Ocean, and gradually light up the wide prospect of hill and dale that lay before and around him. Even on the commanding height on which he stood, he was not too high to prevent his marking the first "villager abroad at early toil,"¹ or even in the early stillness faintly to hear the song which,

"Crowned with her pail, the tripping milkmaid sings."¹

Beneath him, on an outlying spur of the same range of hill, stood the manse and church, with the cottages forming the Kirktown of Fordoun.

¹ The "Minstrel," Book I., stanzas 20 and 39.

The church, surrounded by the graveyard, occupies a prominent position on the top of the last steep declivity of the hill, at the bottom of which, in a narrow valley, separating it from the opposite rising ground, runs the little stream called the water of Luther. On, or near, the same spot on which the present handsome modern church stands, has stood a Christian church from very early days ; certainly from the middle of the thirteenth century, though a far higher antiquity is claimed by some antiquaries for the small old building within the churchyard, said to be the chapel of St. Palladius.

In Beattie's days, the church was a long, narrow building, in which the villagers had worshipped for two or three hundred years. It soon after became ruinous, and was replaced by a short-lived structure, the present church being built in 1830. The village, larger than it now is, formed a square, with its market cross in the centre. On the same side of the square as the church stood the school-house where Beattie lived and taught. It seems to be the only building of his time which remains to the present day.¹ Through the narrow glen at the bottom of the hill on which the church stands, the road from the station to the villages of Fordoun and Auchinblae now runs. It was then a solitary, secluded spot, "finely clothed with wood,"² the approach to the village being by roads that went in a straight line over hills, as was usual in those days. Its nearness to his dwelling made this glen a favourite haunt of Beattie. There, when the labours of the school were over, he repaired to meditate, and there many of his first published essays in poetry were written. He paints the scene in the following lines, written while at Fordoun :—

"Thy shades, thy silence now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme ;
My haunt the hollow cliff whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream ;
Whence the scar'd owl on pinions gray
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose."³

It was really an advantage to Beattie, that his first years at Fordoun were so solitary : it gave him time for thought and observation, and ere long the fruit of these solitary hours appeared in verse. From the year 1756, he occasionally sent small poems to the *Scots Magazine*, signed with his initials and the county or town, Montrose

¹ It is in very good repair, but has long ceased to be used as a school, two buildings for that purpose having succeeded it before the present handsome Board school was erected on a neighbouring eminence.

² Sir William Forbes's description.

³ "Ode to Retirement." Dr. Buchan, a late clergyman of the parish, laid out a footpath along the side of the stream leading to the "hollow cliff," which is known to be the "haunt" Beattie alludes to, and was in the habit of pointing it out to strangers as one of the interesting spots of the parish.

or Aberdeen, from which he wrote. He occupied himself also with poetical translations of Virgil's "Pastorals," and other Latin poems. The only letter dated from Fordoun and preserved in his correspondence relates to these translations. It is dated "Fordoun,¹ 3rd April, 1758," when Beattie was no longer quite unknown, but had gained some reputation as a writer in a narrow home circle. It is addressed to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) John Ogilvie, minister first of Lumphanan, lately of Midmar, in Aberdeenshire—himself an author of various poems, one of which he had sent to Beattie for perusal and criticism. The letter is also interesting, as being a specimen of Beattie's early and ornate style of composition, which, as his taste matured, he discarded, and probably with it his great admiration of Dr. Ogilvie's compositions.²

The following are some extracts from the letter:—"I received your very agreeable letter of the 22nd March, which inclosed the 'Ode to Fancy.' This poem I read with pleasure, as I received it with gratitude. If in one respect it may be compared to a tree covered with a multitude of blossoms, in another respect it is essentially different: the blossoms tarnish and decay while we behold them, our very breath dims their varnish, and clouds their lustre, and our softest touch makes them drop to the ground, while your poem improves in beauty in proportion as we examine it more narrowly, and yields an increase of pleasure every time we peruse it. . . . I am obliged to you for your hint about translation. I was long ago of your opinion. But I obtained all I proposed to myself in the course of the translation of the "Pastorals," which was my own amusement. This made me engage in it, and this carried me through all the drudgery of it. And the few original pieces I have written have convinced me 'that few but those who cannot write, translate.' Some of these, however, I shall trouble you with the perusal of, how soon I can get them written out. . . . I beg you would not put me off with general encomiums, but that you would be somewhat particular in pointing out my faults. However, I take your eulogiums in good part, as I know you are willing to encourage me."

At first, Beattie had no friends³ at Fordoun but the pariah minister, Mr. Forbee, and to him he owed much, being always kindly welcomed at the Manse. After a time, his brother David settled in

¹ The old way of spelling the name.

² Dr. Johnson's estimate of them forms an amusing contrast to young Beattie's. He declared there was neither thought nor imagination of his own in them, and though he agreed to meet Ogilvie at dinner at Boswell's table, he stipulated, "but he must give us none of his poetry!"

³ This is not to be wondered at, as his tastes and those of his neighbours had little or nothing in common. Their interests were centred in the smuggling trade, in which, in spite of their distance of seven or eight miles from the sea, they were largely engaged.

the village. This was a great pleasure to him, inasmuch as, though there was a considerable difference in age, the brothers were much to each other. By and by, when Beattie's poetry began to be spoken of, attention was drawn to him, and kind friends appeared who must have made his later years at Fordoun much pleasanter and brighter. Mr. Garden was the first who took notice of him. He was then sheriff of Kincardineshire, but afterwards a Lord of Session, with the title of Lord Gardenstown. At this time he was living, during the summer months, at Woodstock, the mansion in Drumtochty Glen, now superseded by Drumtochty Castle. He had seen some of Beattie's writings, but was sceptical as to their being the work of so young and obscure a man; so, to make proof of his powers, he begged him to translate for him the invocation to Venus from the first book of Lucretius. Beattie complied with the request, and, retiring into a neighbouring wood, soon returned with a poetical translation, which by its corrections and alterations showed that it was original. This was the beginning of a patronage, afterwards a friendship, which lasted for life. It was of great consequence to Beattie, as Mr. Garden introduced him to other families in the county, and he had the advantage of mixing with people of his own culture of mind, and also of that polish of manner which hitherto he had had no opportunity of acquiring. It was then that his friendship with the clever but eccentric Mr. Burnet (afterwards, when a Lord of Session, Lord Monboddo) began; a friendship which, however much they differed in opinion, was always maintained.

At Monboddo House, Beattie also came under what must have been to him the very educative influence of a beautiful and accomplished young woman, Lord Monboddo's sister. Miss Burnet is described by Mr. Bower as "exquisitely beautiful, and distinguished by her amiable manner and elegant accomplishments." The impression she made on the young poet may be gathered from the elegy¹ he wrote on her. She died very suddenly shortly after her marriage with a Mr. Walker, from Aberdeen, in her twenty-seventh year, in January, 1759.² In the following March, the elegy beginning

"Still shall unthinking man substantial deem"

appeared in the *Scots Magazine*, dated from Aberdeen in February of the same year.

In 1757, when Beattie had been four years at Fordoun, a vacancy occurred in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, which at that time was taught by a rector and three masters under him. Beattie's

¹ In the next generation Burns wrote his Elegy on this lady's niece, another "Eliza" Burnet, who seems to have been as amiable and beautiful as her aunt, and, like her, died early.

² In one edition of Beattie's poems this elegy is said to have been written in 1758, which must be a mistake.

friend and clergyman, Mr. Forbes, urged him to apply for the post. This he was unwilling to do, because it was given to the candidate who passed best the examination on the subjects to be taught. Beattie feared he would fail from want of readiness in remembering the niceties of the Latin Grammar, when under oral examination ; but he yielded to Mr. Forbes's request, and failed, as he had anticipated, to obtain the appointment.¹ He had, however, fully satisfied his examiners, the professors of the University, that his failure was from no real lack of knowledge ; for, in the following year, when another master was required in the same school, he was at once appointed,² without any further trial.

So the time of probation at Fordoun was ended, and in June, 1758, in his twenty-third year, he removed to Aberdeen, where he spent the rest of his life.

¹ On this, Mr. Chalmers, in his "Memoir of Beattie," remarks : "In every part of life, it may be observed, Mr. Beattie appears to have formed an exact estimate of his own talents."

² By the magistrates of Aberdeen, in whose gift the appointment was.

1758—1760.

CHAPTER II.

PROFESSOR, AND LIFE FRIENDSHIPS BEGUN.

Aberdeen as it was in 1758—Beattie publishes his early poems in 1760—Appointment to the Chair of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College in the same year—Exchanges it for the Chair of Moral Philosophy with Dr. George Skene—Induction of the two Professors—Mr. Arbuthnot—Dr. John Gregory—Major Mercer—Sir William Forbes—"The Wise Club"—Controversy with regard to Ossian's poetry—Lord Kaimes—Mrs. Arbuthnot.

THE contrast between the Aberdeen of 1758 and the present day is so great, that it requires a considerable effort of imagination to call up any idea of what the town was at that date, and indeed continued to be, till the beginning of last century. Instead of the handsome granite city of to-day, with its spacious streets and fine buildings, and easy access by good roads north, south and west, we have to picture a small mediæval town, for the most part built on three hills, the Gallow, Castle, and St. Kathrine's Hills.

The chief streets were the Gallowgate, Broadgate, and Castlegate. By the Gallowgate the town was entered from the north, and it was certainly the best and easiest access it could boast of. The Gallowgate Port, built in remote times, still stood at the northern entrance of the picturesque old street, which extended along the side of the Gallow Hill, the ground on the west side sloping down to the loch, then partially drained, and on the east, rising to the ridge of the hill. The Gallowgate led into the Broadgate, which continued in a south-easterly direction, till brought to an abrupt conclusion by a large block of buildings facing its entrance and leaving but a narrow exit, appropriately called the Narrow Wynd, giving access on the east to the Castlegate and on the west to the Shiprow.

The Castlegate was, as it still is, more a handsome place than a street, in the centre of which stood the Cross surrounded by the "Plainstones," used both as a market stance and a promenade by the citizens. The Castle Hill was to the east of the Castlegate, and overlooked the harbour. In very early days, the Kings of Scotland had a castle on this hill, but it having, at one time, fallen into the hands of the English, who burned the town, the townsmen when they retook it, razed it to the ground, to prevent its ever again being used against them, and in its place built a chapel to St. Ninian. On the east gable of this chapel, there was, at this time, a nightbeacon attached, so that it served as a lighthouse for vessels entering or leaving the harbour during the winter months.

To the west of the Castlegate rose St. Kathrine's Hill, so called from a chapel to a saint of that name, which at one time stood on the top of it. The base of this hill was for the most part fringed by houses, with gardens behind them stretching to the top of the hill, from which, an old chronicler tells us, "St. Katrin here offers to the beholders an amusing sight of the river Dee and its beautiful bridge, the monument of a Bishop's¹ piety."

The narrow steep lanes, for they can scarcely be called streets, which encircled St. Kathrine's Hill, were, on the east and south sides, the Shiprow ; on the west side, Putachie's Walk and Carnegie's Brae, which joined the Netherkirkgate at Wallace Neuk ; while the Netherkirkgate ran along the north side, and joined the Shiprow at the Round Table.

Originally, the town had not extended farther west than the Upper and Nether Kirk gates ; for the great church of St. Nicholas stood outside the gates ; but in time the gates were removed and some streets and lanes crept westward approaching the Denburn Valley. This, however, placed an effectual barrier to further extension. The descent on the east side to the pleasant green sward through which the Denburn, then a bright, clear stream, wandered, was rather steep, but on the west the ground rose rapidly and much higher to the top of the Corby Heugh, along which Union Terrace is now built.

This valley of the Denburn barred easy and convenient access to the town from south and west, making it most inconvenient. All roads coming from these directions converged into the Hardgate, and then plunged down the Windmill Brae, to reach the level of the stream, which was crossed by the Bow Bridge, or Brig, as it was called, and the town was entered by "Bow Brig" Street and the Green. The Green lay at the foot of St. Kathrine's Hill, and to get to the upper parts of the town, the Shiprow, steep, narrow and tortuous, was the easiest and most direct route. The citizen of to-day has only to read these facts to realize how much he owes to those who levelled part of St. Kathrine's hill to lay out Union Street, and who spanned the Denburn Valley by Telford's beautiful bridge. He has only to look at his own city, with its changes and improvements, and its immense extension since the keystone of Union Street Bridge was driven on the 25th August, 1803, to estimate the rate at which the pulse of the world beat during the nineteenth century. In nothing is the change more marked than in the style of the buildings in the town, both public and private. In the old streets, some ancient houses still remain ; but, with very few exceptions, the public buildings are all of a later date than 1758. The exceptions are the West Church of St. Nicholas, which took the place of the nave of the Great Church, when it had

¹ The Bridge of Dee was founded by Bishop Elphinstone about 1500. He died before it was completed, Bishop Gavin Dunbar finishing it in 1537.

become ruinous, and the main building of Gordon's Hospital, now Gordon's College. Both these buildings were designed by Mr. Gibb, a native of Aberdeen, whose work as an architect is better known in London, Oxford, and Cambridge. They were either newly finished or just approaching completion in 1758. Of buildings of an older date, which still remain, Collison's and Drum's Aisles (formerly the transept of the Great Church), St. Mary's Chapel, and Greyfriars Church, the last now swept away, make up the meagre catalogue. All else is new.

But the quaint old town, with its simple, hospitable fashions, and its gray old buildings, was probably more pleasing to a young man of Beattie's tastes and habits, than the handsome bustling city of to-day would have been, especially as its quietness was not caused by any slumbering of the intellects of its citizens.

Externally, modern Aberdeen is finer in every way than the city of those days, but it cannot be said that in intellectual vigour its present inhabitants throw their predecessors into the shade. Aberdonians had ever been distinguished as a shrewd, keen race, able to hold their own in every path of life, either at home or abroad. Many men also of distinguished learning and piety had risen from among them.

Beattie was fortunate in coming to Aberdeen when it was rich in such men. Dr. Thomas Reid, and his cousin Dr. John Gregory, in King's College; and Dr. George Campbell and Dr. Alexander Gerard in Marischal College, are names too well known in the history of the literature and philosophy of their time to require comment; while the literary society of the town comprised not a few cultivated men of lesser note.

In this society, the young teacher in the Grammar School took at first a very subordinate position. His old friend and professor, Principal Blackwell, was dead, but Beattie was favourably known to the other professors under whom he had studied, and he must from the first have come much in contact with the Rector of the Grammar School, Dr. Dun, whose son-in-law he afterwards became. His poems also brought him into notice and served as an introduction to congenial society; and we learn from his biographer, Mr. Chalmers, that "his conversational talents, it is yet remembered, daily increased the number of his friends."

About two years after he came to Aberdeen, he published a small volume of his poems and translations.¹ The reception which his work met with, on this his first appearance before the public as an author, must have been very gratifying to him. The book was published both in Edinburgh and in London, and was very favourably reviewed by the English critics. They "considered it an acquisition

¹ In March, 1760, Chalmers says he issued "Proposals" for printing this volume, and that it was not till February of the following year that the book actually appeared. Sir W. Forbes gives 1760 as the date of publication.

to the republic of letters, and pronounced that since Mr. Gray they had not met with a poet of more harmonious numbers, more pleasing imagination, or more spiritual expression."¹ This praise must have been encouraging to him at the time, but so little did he, on after thought, agree with it, that, in later years he did all he could to withdraw these youthful efforts of his Muse from the public, and to prevent their being reprinted.

In the meantime, however, these poems, afterwards so despised by their author, were the indirect means of promoting him to the honourable and useful position that he held for the remainder of his life. One day in the month of May, 1760, after the "proposals" for his publication had appeared, he was dining with the parents of one of his pupils, and, as was frequently the case on such occasions, he was asked to repeat one of his poems. This he began to do, but, as he failed to remember part of it, his friend Mr. Arbuthnot, who was present, begged him to go to his lodgings for his manuscript. He complied with the request, and on his way met some one who told him that Dr. Duncan, Professor of Natural Philosophy in Marischal College, had died suddenly. On returning to his friends, and mentioning what he had heard, he was much surprised by Mr. Arbuthnot at once advising that he should apply for the vacant professorship. When convinced that the proposal was made seriously, Beattie urged the hopelessness of such an application by one so young and so unknown as himself. But Mr. Arbuthnot had already formed so high an opinion of his friend's talents and capabilities that he would not listen to objections, and at once communicated with the Earl of Erroll on the subject.

Mr. Arbuthnot was a native of Peterhead, and a near relative of the famous Dr. Arbuthnot, the friend of Pope and Swift. At this time he was in business in Peterhead, but he afterwards became Secretary to the Board of Trustees for Fisheries and Manufactures in Edinburgh. Sir W. Forbes describes him as a man well versed in the classics, as well as in English, French and Italian literature; and a delightful companion, from his conversation being, not only instructive, but also most entertaining, as he had an inexhaustible flow of spirits, and a vein of delicate and peculiar humour. Probably, his business often brought him to Aberdeen, as very early on settling there Beattie became acquainted with him. The acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, which became only closer and stronger as years went on.

Mr. Arbuthnot was intimate with Lord Erroll, and succeeded in interesting him in Beattie. Through Lord Milton, Lord Erroll applied to the Duke of Argyll, who at this time had the greatest influence in the disposal of Crown appointments in Scotland. The

¹ From Chalmers, who quotes the *Monthly Review*, Vol. XXIV., 1761.

application was successful. In a letter dated 9th September, 1760, Lord Adam Gordon informs Beattie that his commission as Professor of Philosophy in Marischal College had been signed by the King and despatched that night to Edinburgh. He adds, "You owe this entirely to the Duke of Argyle, and Lord Erroll, who interested himself very warmly for you."

The chair of Natural Philosophy was not suited to Beattie's tastes or acquirements; but, fortunately, at that time Dr. Gerard resigned the Moral Philosophy chair to become Professor of Divinity, and it was arranged that Beattie should succeed him, while the Natural Philosophy chair was filled by Dr. George Skene. Dr. Skene was a member of a well-known family in Aberdeen, distinguished for their abilities. For two generations, the Skenes were the leading men of the town.

The two young professors were inducted to their chairs on the 8th of October. Beattie gives the following account of the ceremony, of the admission and of the entertainment given after it, in a letter to Mr. Arbuthnot dated 21st October. In this letter he also enclosed his proposed preface to his poems, just about to be published. He writes: "It was a real disappointment to me that you were obliged to go with Lord Marischal¹ to Slains on the very day of my admission. That evening at six, I repaired to the college where the admitters were duly convened. After undergoing a slight examination, to every particular of which I had the good fortune to return a ready answer, an act of admission was made out and signed by all the members present; I was arrayed in a black gown and admitted in form. The company met at eight o'clock to the number of about an hundred or more (for George Skene and I were admitted the same evening); they were all in good humour, and did not dissolve till near midnight. Notwithstanding the noise and hurry it required no recollection in me to be sensible of your absence. The day before, when Lord Erroll and Lord Marischal were in the college, the former did me the honour to repeat the invitation he had before given me to come to Slains Castle for a few days, how soon I was at leisure."

The college session began on the 1st of November, so there were but a very few weeks in which to prepare to meet his class. To be called on to lecture on such a subject as Moral Philosophy so unexpectedly and on such short notice was a difficult task for a young man of twenty-five, but his previous studies and the bent of his mind fitted him for the work, while his habit of diligent study and his readiness in composition would come to his aid. And we may well believe, what seems to have been supposed at the time, that during his first session Dr. Gerard gave him valuable assistance.

¹ Earl Marischal's attainder had been reversed the previous year.

But preparation for the instruction of his class was henceforth considered by Beattie to claim the first place in his studies. He spared no pains on the composition of his lectures at the first delivery, and he subjected them to much careful rewriting and correction in after years. His whole course of instruction was carefully laid out, and a record of it kept, in a beautifully written journal, still preserved, which dates from January 6th, 1762, to April 2nd, 1792. At first, part of his instruction was given in Latin, which he spoke with great fluency, but many of his students being unable to follow him, he had to discontinue the practice. In the personal welfare of his students he took a deep interest, the more so as, the Moral Philosophy class being the last class in the curriculum, it fell to him to give the parting words of counsel and warning to the young men at the close of their college career and on their entrance on life. This he felt to be a great responsibility. How he was regarded by his students we learn from Mr. Chalmers, who had been one of them, and though his picture of the professor was drawn at a time long subsequent to the latter's induction, we may learn from it what Beattie had all along aimed to be to his students, and how he had succeeded. Mr. Chalmers said: "Few men have exceeded him in anxious and kind attentions to his pupils. It was his practice to invite them by small parties to his house and unbend his mind in gay conversation, encouraging them to speak with familiarity on common topics, and to express their doubts with freedom on any subjects connected with their studies. Those whom he observed particularly regular and attentive in the class, he honoured with his kindest patronage, and corresponded with on friendly and easy terms long after they quitted the university. By these means he was so endeared to his scholars that I am not able to mention him at all as a disciplinarian. I can recollect no instance in which he found it necessary to command attention by any influence more strong than the reverence which his character and manner procured without any effort and continued without any abatement." During the five months of the college session, from November to April, Beattie taught for three hours every day except Tuesdays and Fridays, when the afternoon hour was omitted. There seems to have been no Saturday holiday at that time. The hours of meeting were eight and eleven in the morning, and three in the afternoon. This busy time was followed by the long vacation of seven months, which gave ample time for literary work, and was eagerly welcomed and fully employed by the young professor.

The next ten years of his life were the most prolific, and probably the happiest, and freest from care, of his manhood. Surrounded by men of the same tastes and with the same high thoughts and aims as himself, enjoying their friendship and stimulated by it, he lived in an atmosphere most congenial to him, and most favourable for the development of his powers.

The friend to whom he owed most at this period of his life was Dr. John Gregory, whose interest in Beattie was that of a father or elder brother, so close and tender were the relations. There is no record of the time at which the friendship began, but it must have been soon after Beattie came to Aberdeen.

Dr. Gregory, a grandson of James Gregory, the friend of Newton and inventor of the reflecting telescope, was the son of Dr. James Gregory, Professor of Medicine in King's College, Old Aberdeen. His elder brother succeeded his father in 1756, and he himself succeeded his brother in the same chair. In 1754, he had married Elizabeth, daughter of the thirteenth Lord Forbes, a lady distinguished for her intellect and wit, as well as for her beauty. How much she was prized, and how deeply her loss was mourned by her husband, we gather from his mention of her in his "Father's Legacy to his Daughters," written to supply to them, as far as he could, the want of a mother's care on their entrance into life. But, at the time we speak of, she and her husband were in Old Aberdeen. The house that was attached to the Professorship of Medicine, stood just opposite the entrance to the fine old buildings of King's College, in its own grounds and surrounded by trees. There, in all probability, the three Gregorys in succession lived. It was upon the appointment of the fourth Gregory to this chair, Dr. William Gregory, grandson of Beattie's friend, in 1841, that this old house, which had long stood untenanted, and had become ruinous, was pulled down and the present house built for him, within the same grounds but on a site farther removed from the street. It has, however, since the union of King's and Marischal Colleges, been transferred from the Professor of Medicine to the Professor of Biblical Criticism. In the old house, we may suppose, Beattie was often hospitably received, and there he would meet Dr. Thomas Reid, who, since 1752, had been Professor of Philosophy in King's College, and was, through his mother, a cousin of Dr. Gregory.

Mrs. Gregory's death, which took place in 1761, would draw Beattie oftener to the Old town, to strive to cheer his friend. Dr. Gregory's children were but infants, and could neither share nor soothe his sorrow. It would be a relief and comfort to pour out his grief to one so sympathetic and tender-hearted as Beattie; and that he did so we know by the lines Beattie wrote for him, as an expression of his feelings with regard to his wife and her character. In his works, they are entitled "Epitaph, being part of an inscription for a monument to be erected by a gentleman to the memory of his lady."¹ Some such previous intercourse could alone explain the

¹ "Farewell, my best beloved, whose heavenly mind
Genius with virtue, strength with softness join'd," etc.

Of this epitaph Beattie remarks to Mrs. Montagu that he wrote it at Dr.

closeness of the tie which subsisted between them, and which their letters disclosed when, in 1764, Dr. Gregory left Aberdeen and settled in Edinburgh.

Another close friendship which lasted to the end of his life was formed by Beattie about this time. Mr. Mercer, a young officer who had served in Germany, in a British regiment, under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, during the "Seven Years War," returned to Aberdeen after the Peace of Paris, concluded in the end of 1762. He was the son of a well-connected Aberdeenshire gentleman, who, having joined in the Rebellion of "Forty-five," had been obliged to retire to Paris. He sent his son to Aberdeen to attend classes in Marischal College, and on his return to Paris introduced him into society. There young Mercer remained until his father's death, when he returned to Scotland and afterwards entered the Army.

In Paris, he had acquired the polished manner for which he was distinguished, and had also diligently prosecuted the study of literature, to which he always turned when he had leisure from his more active duties. French literature had naturally engaged his attention in Paris; in Aberdeen, the influence of his college days and the memory of his old teacher, Principal Blackwell, returned, and he took up the study of Greek with such ardour that Dr. Beattie afterwards said of him he doubted whether there were at that time six men in Scotland who knew Greek so well as he.

Before he again joined the Army, he married Miss Kathrine Douglas, sister of Sylvester Douglas, afterwards Lord Glenbervie, another early and lifelong friend of Beattie.

Mr. Mercer finally retired from the Army in 1772, having attained the rank of major, though, during the American War, he again gave his services to his country in a regiment of Fencibles. His letters to Beattie show that their friendship never cooled through absence; and it was given them to spend the evening of their days in near neighbourhood. Major Mercer and his family, after many wanderings, built and settled at Sunny Bank, a suburban residence (which still remains) situated between the old and new towns of Aberdeen.

The innermost circle of Dr. Beattie's friendships was completed when, in 1765, he met Sir William Forbes, his future biographer, in the house of their common friend Mr. Arbuthnot, who was by that time settled in Edinburgh. They must have already known each other by report, as they had many friends in common, among them Major Mercer, who was a relative and early playmate of Sir William. Their first meeting in the spring of that year was followed by much intercourse during the autumn, when Sir William was in Aberdeenshire visiting his relatives. Thus began a friendship which time

Gregory's request, and that "it has one kind of merit not very common in these compositions, that of being perfectly true."

only drew closer and made more intimate, and which Sir W. Forbes regarded "as not only my pride, but as a source of the purest pleasure, and, I may add, that if I am not a better man for the correspondence and instructive conversation of Dr. Beattie, great will be my condemnation at my last account." How much Dr. Beattie owed to it, the rest of his life shows. There was nothing in his literary business or family affairs in which Sir William was not ready with help, counsel, or solace, at all times proving himself a "true friend."

Sir William was descended from the Forbeses of Monymusk, and was also nearly connected with the Forbeses of Pitaligo. The good old Lord Pitaligo,¹ whose lands were forfeited and his title attainted on account of his joining in the Rebellion of "Forty-five," was one of his guardians. His father had died when he was but four years old, and he was brought up by an excellent mother. To her "upright character, pious habits, and sedulous care," he rejoiced in after life to say he owed everything. His father had inherited but a pittance out of the wreck of his family estate, and had not lived long enough to add much to the same; so his widow was very poorly left. Her son considered it his duty to restore his ancient family to its former position; therefore, he went into business in Edinburgh, and eventually, along with Sir James Hunter Blair and Sir Robert Herries, founded a Banking House which became the firm of "Forbes, Hunter and Company."

While he prospered in business, he found time to assist in all public philanthropic schemes and to abound in private charity, while his house was the resort of all that was best in the society of the time. He survived Dr. Beattie only three years, dying shortly after he had published the biography of his friend. Sir Walter Scott pays a just tribute to his worth in the introduction to the fourth canto of "Marmion."

"Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
The tribute to his minstrel's shade;
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold—
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!
But not around his honour'd urn,
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
The thousand eyes his care had dried,
Pour at his name a bitter tide;
And frequent falls the grateful dew,
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
'The widow's shield, the orphan's stay.'"

¹ Said to be the original of Scott's Baron of Bradwardine.

Soon after he was inducted to his professorship, Beattie became a member of the famous Philosophical Society, or, as it was popularly called, the "Wise Club." This society owed its origin to Dr. Reid in 1758. At its meetings, which were held alternately in Anderson's New Inn in the Castlegate, and in Red Lion Tavern in Old Aberdeen, on the second and the fourth Wednesday of every month at five in the afternoon, an essay, written by each member in turn, was read and commented on, and a subject, previously agreed upon, discussed. At half-past eight, the serious business of the club closed, the president left the chair, and a simple supper was served. General conversation was then permitted till ten o'clock, when the party separated. Drs. Reid and Gregory, Dr. David Skene, a physician of genius and taste, whose speciality was botany, on which he corresponded with Linnaeus, the Rev. Dr. Robert Trail, nephew of the Bishop of Down and Connor, and Dr. Stewart, Professor of Mathematics in Marischal College, a great friend of Dr. Reid, seem to have been the first members of the club, which afterwards included Gerard, Campbell, Beattie, and others.

The first outlines of many works which made the names of Reid, Gregory, Gerard, Campbell, and Beattie so well known in the literary world of that time were read in the form of essays at this society, and no doubt owed much of their perfected form to the remarks and suggestions made upon them in the discussions that followed.

On his first joining the club, the essays contributed by Beattie were chiefly on criticism, a subject on which his early letters show that he thought much. At this time, the great controversy as to Ossian's poems was raging, not only as to their authenticity, but also as to the rank they were to hold in the realm of poetry. So great was the enthusiasm in their favour, that they were placed on a level with the "Iliad" and "Paradise Lost" by their admirers, from whom there were few dissentients. In Scotland, it seemed almost treason to doubt either the authenticity or the transcendent merit of the Highland Bard. Beattie gave no opinion in regard to the authenticity of the poems, but from the first demurred to Ossian's taking rank with Homer, or Milton, or indeed being included in the highest order of poets at all.

In upholding this opinion, he was led to consider what were the principles that should guide the judgment, in assigning their due rank to poetical compositions. His thoughts on the subject he threw into the form of an essay, the first part of which he read at the "Club" in the winter of 1762. It was not at that time intended for publication, but was afterwards completed, and, with the addition of the principles on which musical composition should also be judged, was published in 1776, along with other essays, as an "Essay on Poetry and Music."

But, in the meantime, a rumour of his being engaged in writing

a critical work, hostile to Ossian, was spread, and created alarm for Beattie's reputation among his friends, and indignation on the part of the Bard's admirers. Of one of the expostulations addressed to him on the subject, Beattie gives the following account in a letter to Mr. Arbuthnot, dated 5th March, 1763. "Lord Kaimes lately wrote to a correspondent in this neighbourhood, expressing great concern to hear that I was engaged in a critical work, the intention of which was, as his lordship imagined, to depreciate the writings of Ossian. The gentleman to whom this letter was sent, was desired by Lord Kaimes to talk with me on the subject, and if he could not bring me to change my sentiments, to acquaint himself of my plan, and of the principles on which I intended to suggest an opinion so dishonourable to the Highland Bard. The gentleman gave me notice of this in a letter, and in an answer which I returned next day, I explained to him my sentiments on this subject, as far as the bounds of a letter would permit: 'That I was far from any design of depreciating Ossian, that I had a high opinion of the merit of that bard, though I could not bring myself to think of him on an equality with Homer and one or two more. That frequent conversations on this subject had led me to consider more particularly the principles which ascertain the dignity of several kinds of poetry; that I was indeed engaged in a work on this subject, but had no views of publishing it; but that Ossian had no more concern in that undertaking than Virgil or any other poet, except that several conversations about him had given occasion to it.' I must beg you will take the trouble to undeceive Lord Kaimes as to this matter, I would not wish that any man of merit should think hardly of me; but I should look upon it as a very heavy misfortune to forfeit the good wishes of his lordship, whose taste, learning and philosophical abilities will ever command the highest applause and admiration from every friend of the polite arts and of human nature. You know my sentiments of Ossian. That species of poetry which is commonly known by the name of Description, and which consists in imitating the appearance of external things, he seems to me to have carried almost as high as any poet whatever, except Milton. In the other species, where the object is mind, I think he is inferior both to Shakespeare and Homer. Pray what has become of the 'Grotesquiad' and the translation of Addison's 'Pigmies'! Though I am very little interested in their fate, I should be glad to know whether they be still extant. It gives me the deepest concern to hear of the death of your cousin Mrs. Arbuthnot's son."

The young man, whose spurs had still to be won on the literary field, was evidently anxious to propitiate a veteran writer like Lord Kaimes, who had made criticism a subject of study, and had written on it. But though comparing Ossian, as was the fashion of the day, to poets with whom he would not now be mentioned, Beattie

still holds firmly to his opinion that he is only a poet of the second rank. Probably, his lordship resented this independence of opinion expressed by one so much younger than himself, and from this time may be dated his prejudice against Beattie, which was only overcome years afterwards.¹

The "Grotesquiad" and the translation of Addison's "Pigmies," mentioned in Beattie's letter to Arbuthnot, were poetical compositions he had sent him for criticism. The first belonged to the class of Beattie's writings already mentioned, which were never intended for publication, and of which no example is to be found among his papers. Yet he was fond of them himself, and gives the following account of them in a letter to his friend Dr. Blacklock.

"Those pieces of mine from which I have received the highest entertainment are such as are altogether improper for publication ; being written in a sort of burlesque humour for the amusement of some particular friends, or for some select company. Of these I have a pretty large collection, and though I should be ashamed to be publicly known as the author of many of them, I cannot help entertaining a certain partiality towards them, arising perhaps from this circumstance in their favour, that the pleasure they have yielded me has been altogether sincere, unmixed with that chagrin which never fails to attend an unfortunate publication." The other piece about the fate of which he inquires was published along with other poems in 1766.

The concluding sentence of the letter to Mr. Arbuthnot makes mention for the first time of a lady who often acted the part of Molière's housekeeper for Beattie, though by education and talent far superior to that historical personage, as indeed she required to be, to be able to form a judgment on works so different in aim and subject as Beattie's were from those of Molière. The daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, chaplain to Earl Marischal and tutor to his sons,² she had had the advantage of a literary education, of which her excellent abilities had enabled her to reap the full

¹ In 1788, Dr. Beattie writes to Mrs. Montague of Lord Kaimes, shortly after his death. "The literary labours of Lord Kaimes have come to an end at last. He was certainly an extraordinary man ; and though he cannot be vindicated in everything, his enemies must allow that his mind was uncommonly active, and his industry indefatigable. He was six and fifty years an author, for to a Collection of Decisions dated in 1726, I have seen a preface of his writing. He retained his good humour to the last. He and I misunderstood one another for several years, but we were thoroughly reconciled long before his death, and he acknowledged that he had utterly mistaken my character." For this reconciliation he acknowledges his indebtedness to the Duchess of Gordon, when writing to sympathise with her on the death of Lord Kaimes, who had valued her friendship so highly that she was amongst those he remembered in his last hours. Dr. Beattie adds : "As I wish to die satisfied with everybody, it gives me pleasure to think that before his death he became satisfied with me ; this and many other good things I owe to your Grace."

² The last Earl Marischal and his brother the Field-Marshal Keith.

benefit. For a time, she was led away by the sceptical writings of the day, but was brought back to her early religious faith by reading Butler's "Analogy," which, next to the Bible, became her most valued book and favourite study.

In 1757, she had married Captain Andrew Arbuthnot, a cousin of Beattie's friend; and three years afterwards she was left a widow with one son. Her husband, who was a ship's captain, died of fever in America, and his vessel, which brought the news of his death and which contained all his worldly goods, was wrecked in the Bay of Peterhead on its return. She was thus left destitute of any means of her own, and being of too independent a spirit to owe her support to friends, she maintained herself and her boy by her own exertions. By means of a bursary, she was enabled to give him the advantage of a college education, and while he was attending classes she came to live with him in Aberdeen. It was at that time she became acquainted with Dr. Gregory, Beattie, and others of the literary society, by whom she was much esteemed. Her son went into the Army and died early, as is mentioned in this letter. From this time until 1795—she died at the age of eighty-six—she lived in Peterhead in what would be considered in these days penury, for her yearly income won by herself did not exceed £10. On this small sum, with what help her friends could contrive that she should accept by not letting her know where it came from, she maintained the appearance and status of a gentlewoman, and at her frugal entertainment of a "dish of tea," such guests as the Duchess of Gordon, the Countess of Erroll, and others of the northern nobility were to be found. She found means also to be charitable as well as hospitable, and though her alms were very small, often in the form of a handful of oatmeal, they were heartily given. Dr. Beattie often lodged with her in his frequent visits to the baths at Peterhead, and it was by his means that her latter days were more bountifully provided for. In one of his many visits to Mrs. Montagu, he had given her the history of his old friend's brave struggle and cheerful, pious resignation, which so interested her that she begged Dr. Beattie to prevail on Mrs. Arbuthnot to accept a small annuity from her. This he fortunately was able to do, and the last eleven years of her life were cheered not only by the gifts but also by the friendship of Mrs. Montagu.

1763—1769.

CHAPTER III.

LITERARY FRIENDSHIPS AND WORK.

First visit to London—Italian Studies—"The Judgment of Paris"—"On the Death of Churchill"—Dr. Gregory settles in Edinburgh"—Beattie visits him there—Is then introduced to Sir William Forbes—"Poetical Epistle to Dr. Blacklock"—"The Hermit"—Intercourse with the poet Gray—New Editions of Poems, 1766—First mention of Mrs. Montagu—Letters from Dr. Gregory and Mr. Arbuthnot—First hints of the "Essay on Truth" and the "Minstrel," 1766—His bad health—The Honourable Charles Boyd—Degree of D.D. given to Mr. Blacklock—Beattie's marriage in 1767—Introduces Mr. Williamson to Mr. Gray—Copy of Gray's works printed at the Brothers Foulis' suggestion—Correspondence relating to this—Edition of Milton by the Brothers Foulis—Anxiety about his mother—Poetical Address to Ross of Lochlee—Birth of his eldest son—Letter from the Earl of Erroll on hearing that Beattie had named his son after him—Sends the "Essay on Truth" to press, 1769—Epitaph on Sir William Forbes's father—Mr. Sylvester Douglas—The Earl of Buchan, through Beattie, presents a "silver pen" to be competed for yearly by the students of Marischal College.

IN the summer of 1763, Beattie went to London for the first time. He seems to have had no introduction and to have known no one, except the bookseller who had published his poems in 1760; nor do we know of anything that he either did or saw, except that he made a pilgrimage with a Scotch friend to Pope's house at Twickenham.

He was at this time engaged in the study of Tasso's "*Gerusalemme Liberata*," of which a new translation had just appeared. He criticises both the poem and its translation, in writing to Mr. Arbuthnot in the end of this year, and his strictures on the latter probably suggested to his friends the idea of his undertaking to translate the poem into English verse more worthy of it—a task which we afterwards find they urged upon him.

During the summer of 1764, he wrote the "*Judgment of Paris*," a poem which was published in the following spring. In the end of that year, Churchill died,¹ and, to the great indignation of many, it was proposed that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey. Beattie was urged by some of his friends to write against this desecration, and, as he felt keenly on the subject, he readily undertook to do so. His verses, "*On the Death of Churchill*," were at

¹ In Knight's "*English Encyclopædia*," Churchill is said to have died at Boulogne in 1765, but Beattie, in January, 1765, wrote a vindication of his attacking the memory of the dead, when giving his verses on Churchill to the world; so his death must have taken place in 1764.

first published anonymously, and had a rapid sale.¹ They were very severe, but this severity he justified in a letter prefixed to them when he acknowledged his authorship, and included them in a collection of his poems published soon after. In this copy, however, he omitted Churchill's name and addressed him as "Bufo."

Early in 1765, Dr. Gregory left Aberdeen and went to Edinburgh, that he might have a larger field for practice as a physician. Shortly after going there, he was appointed Professor of the Practice of Physic in the University, an appointment which his distinguished son, Dr. James Gregory, subsequently held.

To Beattie, the removal of his friend made a great blank. He writes to Mr. Arbuthnot in January, "Dr. Gregory is going to leave us, at which I am heartily sorry on my own account, and you are heartily glad both on your own account and on his. What a pity that the interests of friends should be so inconsistent!" But, in this case, they did not prove to be wholly so, as what Beattie lost by his friend's removal from Aberdeen was in part compensated by its being the means of his own introduction into the society of Edinburgh.

Hitherto, there is no mention of Beattie's having been in Edinburgh at all. But as soon as the College Session closed in the spring of 1765, when Dr. Gregory could not have been many weeks in Edinburgh, we find Beattie there, and his correspondence shows that from that time he emerged from provincial obscurity and began to take his place among men of letters. It indicates also, indirectly, what impression personal intercourse with him made on his compeers. Dr. Gregory's letters show how deeply he was interested in his young friend's advancement, and that he left nothing undone to introduce him to the best society of the day, both literary and social, in which he himself moved; but this would have been of little avail had not Beattie proved himself a valuable acquisition to that society.

As has been already mentioned, it was on the first recorded visit to Edinburgh that he met Sir William Forbes; and among other friends whom this visit procured him, were Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Blacklock, the blind author and poet, and Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, to whom James I. (of Scotland) owes the vindication of his authorship of "Christ's Kirk on the Green." To these gentlemen, two of Beattie's poems, written about this time, owe their origin. A poetical epistle to Dr. Blacklock, published the following year, was an answer to verses, and a gift of his works, which Dr. Blacklock had sent to Beattie on his return to Aberdeen; and "The Hermit" was written shortly after, at the request of a young lady, to suit the tune of "Pentland Hills," which Mr. Tytler had composed in imitation of the old Scottish

¹ From Sir William Forbes's Life.

melodies. Beattie's own remark on this composition, which he makes in a few undated lines to Mr. Tytler, will probably be generally acquiesced in. "The above is a copy of the verses I wrote to your tune of 'Pentland Hills.' The sentiments, I fear, are not such as become a song, but the measure corresponds well enough with the music."

Yet another valued friendship was formed this year. The poet Gray was in Scotland, and Beattie, an ardent admirer of his poetry, was most anxious to meet him, and Dr. Gregory was equally anxious to bring about the meeting, "as," he writes, "I think you very congenial spirits."

In reply to an invitation that Beattie sent him to visit him in Aberdeen, Mr. Gray regretted he had not time to go so far north, but hoped Beattie might be able to go to Glamis, where he was at present the guest of Lord Strathmore, who commissioned him to say "He shall be extremely glad to see you." Beattie accepted this invitation, and the two days he spent at Glamis were productive of a friendship and correspondence that lasted as long as Mr. Gray lived.

On his return to Aberdeen, Beattie suggested to his colleagues in Marischal College that the degree of Bachelor of Laws should be offered by them to Mr. Gray. The suggestion was readily adopted, and he was empowered to write and ask whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Gray to receive this honour from them. In reply Mr. Gray wrote :—

"GLAMIS CASTLE,
"October 2nd, 1765.

"I must beg you would present my most grateful acknowledgment to your learned Society for the public mark of their esteem which you say they are disposed to confer on me. I embrace with so deep and just sense of their goodness the *substance* of that honour they do me, that I hope it may plead my pardon with them if I do not accept the form. I have been, sir, for several years a member of the University of Cambridge, and formerly (when I had some thoughts of the profession) took a Bachelor of Laws degree there; since that time, though long qualified by my standing, I have always neglected to finish my course and claim my Doctor's degree; judge therefore whether it will not look like a slight and some sort of contempt, if I receive the same degree from a sister university. I certainly would avoid giving any offence to a set of men among whom I have passed so many easy and (I may say) happy hours of my life: yet shall ever retain in my memory the obligations you have laid me under and be proud of my connection with the University of Aberdeen.

"It is a pleasure to me to find you are not offended with the liberties I took when you were at Glamis. You took me too

literally if you thought I meant in the least to discourage you in your pursuit of poetry. All I intended to say was, that if either vanity (that is, a general and undistinguishing desire of applause) or interest or ambition has any place in the breast of a poet, he stands a great chance in these our days of being severely disappointed : and yet, after all these passions are suppressed, there may remain in the mind of one *ingenti percussus amore* (and such I take you to be) incitements of a better sort, strong enough to make him write verse all his life both for his own pleasure and that of all posterity.

"I am sorry for the trouble you have had, to gratify my curiosity and tone of superstition,¹ yet I heartily thank you. On Monday, sir, I set forward on my way to England, where if I can be of any little use to you, or should ever have the good fortune to see you, it will be a particular satisfaction to me.

"P.S.—Remember Dryden and be blind to his faults."

In 1776, Beattie published a new edition of his poems, omitting some that had appeared in the first edition, improving others, and adding "The Judgment of Paris," "Verses on the Proposal to erect a Monument to Churchill," "The Wolf and the Shepherd, a Fable," "The Epistle to Dr. Blacklock," and "The Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes." The book was well received by the public and by his friends, but the latter were eager that he should undertake some more serious work than those small poems, something that would show his genius to the world, and might bring him not only fame but worldly profit.

The kind anxiety of his friends on his account must have been very gratifying and encouraging to Beattie ; but to write merely for fame or profit as his motive was impossible to him, as for any man of genius and high ideals. A sense of duty to his students and the innate gift of poetry led him to write the two works by which he is best known, and both of which he began this year. The first hint of his writing on the prevailing scepticism of the day what at length was published as his "Essay on Truth," we find in a letter to Sir William Forbes, written in January ; and, in September, he tells Dr. Blacklock of his having, as the amusement of his leisure hours, begun a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, which became "The Minstrel." From the first work he expected obloquy, not fame ; and of the poem he says, "But I am so far from intending this performance for the press that I am morally certain it will never be finished."

The following letters from Dr. Gregory and Mr. Arbuthnot, written after the new edition of his poems had appeared, show their interest in Beattie's advancement and the advice they were urging

¹ Mr. Gray had inquired about the popular superstitions of Scotland, and Beattie had sent him a "History of Second Sight and of Witches."

upon him. They also contain the first mention of Mrs. Montagu, whose friendship with Beattie may be said to have owed its origin to the opinion she then formed of his poems.

FROM DR. GREGORY.

"EDINBURGH,

"August 11th, 1766.

"I am but just returned from the North of England, where I was about ten days, and have brought Mrs. Montagu along with me. She is highly pleased with your poems, and, as there is not a better judge, male or female, in Britain, will I am sure contribute to give them that character they so well deserve.

"The additional poems do you great honour, but as I said to you before, you should come here for a few days by all means, where I can tell you many things which will not write. It will do your health good, and it will do you good in many ways. Pray what is become of your Philosophical book? I know you will write nothing but what will do you credit, but I wish we saw you before you publish it. If it is abstract, tho' it be never so wise and never so deep, people will not read it. There is a levity and dissipation that prevail here as well as at London, which makes people dislike every work that does not amuse, in the most trifling sense of the word amusement, and that cannot be perfectly comprehended at first reading. There is not a single person here of my acquaintance who has read Dr. Reid's book half through, but this is betwixt ourselves."

FROM THE SAME.

"EDINBURGH,

"December 31st, 1766.

"It is a long time since I have had any accounts of you, and as I suppose you have some days' vacation as well as we, I beg you will let me know how you are and what you are doing. You would not take a journey in autumn, which I assured you would have done you a great deal of good, because you thought it an interested advice, and I meant it to do good to your mind, your person and your worldly estate. Though there is no immediate prospect of any vacancy in this college, yet I can see several places in it that would suit you, and, I think, put you more in that rank and station in life which you are entitled to hold. With this view, which Arbuthnot would tell you I had, I think you should be personally known to some people here who could be of service in such a scheme. For the same reason I beg you will take some pains about your Philosophical work, and likewise about these Critical Discourses you read to the Club, which I think would do you honour. I want you to be known to the world in another light than that of a poet, because I think you one of the very few who have united a truly philosophical with a poetical genius. In the last character you have

acquired all that it can give anybody, which is empty praise, but the former I hope will procure you something more substantial. In your graver writings I beg you will consider the levity and frivolousness of the age you live in. Take my word for it, no one reads now with a view to instruction. Everybody reads for amusement, and they will throw aside any book, however ingenious or profound, that does not contribute to this, and that is not wrote with such perspicuity as to convey upon every occasion its full meaning at the first glance—a thing, by the way, often impracticable when you think and write as an original Author. You must likewise treat the Heathens with proper respect, and consider that they are now by far the most numerous and powerful party, and that they treat us who pretend a regard to religion as either fools or hypocrites. Seriously, this is the case, though I will not admit that I am either the one or the other, but as I have now publicly taken my side and avowed my principles, I am determined to stand by them on every proper occasion. I am sure I am no bigot, for I know many of my friends who look upon every species of Religion to be a gross delusion, and yet I believe them to be sensible, candid, worthy men. Yet few of them will return that compliment to any man who professes to believe that he is not to die like a dog. In short, it appears to me that bigotry is fast going over to the side of infidelity, so I would have you consider well what you are about. In my younger days many of my friends were no Christians, but they were zealous Deists and believers in a future state of existence. But such a distinction does not now subsist. Absolute dogmatic atheism is the present tone.”

In a letter, dated Newhall, 30th September, 1766, Mr. Arbuthnot expresses the pleasure he had experienced in reading the new collection of Beattie's poems, noting for special commendation the two stanzas¹ that had been added to the “Ode to Retirement” as being “full of that simplicity of style and picturesque imagery which always ought to distinguish compositions of that nature, though I do not think that this circumstance has been much attended to, particularly in many compositions of the present age.” Further, in the same letter, he remarks with regard to Mrs. Montagu, whom he had now met for the first time, “I know not whether Dr. Gregory informed you with what delight Mrs. Montagu read your poems, a lady who, to the genius, art and knowledge of the most knowing of our sex, joins all the elegance, taste and imagination that can embellish her own. Indeed I have seldom or never met with any person in whom are united so many amiable qualities. She not only read your compositions but pointed out to us many beauties which we had not observed before, or had not remembered. I have mentioned this

¹ Stanzas 5 and 6.

occurrence to you because I know it will give you pleasure, and because the applause of one such critic is more than an atonement for the scoffing and malignity of a thousand snarlers, who, because they are unable to judge, are seldom inclined to praise or to pardon." Mr. Arbuthnot concludes his letter by urging on Beattie the task of translating Tasso's great work, a task he thinks him "in every respect equal to," and one that is rendered necessary by the defects of his previous translators, which he enumerates. If Beattie should determine on undertaking this work Mr. Arbuthnot offers him the use of various books which might be helpful to him.

In their letters, both Dr. Gregory and Mr. Arbuthnot alluded to the state of Beattie's health, which was at this time very distressing. He suffered much from giddiness and headache all his life; but, during this summer and the following winter he was more afflicted by these maladies than usual, and describes himself as being at times incapable of reading, writing, or thinking. During the summer, he went to Peterhead, where he lodged with his old friend Mrs. Arbuthnot, and either riding or walking was much in the open air, trying to regain health. When there, he was within easy reach of Slains Castle, where, since his first introduction to Lord Erroll, he had not ceased to visit; and where, during the summer, he often met Lord Erroll's brother, the Honourable Charles Boyd, whose warm and affectionate friendship for Beattie dates from this year. Mr. Boyd was then living at Ludquharn in the parish of Longside; he afterwards settled for a time with his wife and family in Old Aberdeen, in the house (55, Don Street) now belonging to Mr. Paton, of Granholm. Mr. Boyd eventually died in Edinburgh.

The following extracts from the letters which passed between Mr. Boyd and Beattie on first acquaintance, give a pleasant idea of their intercourse.

FROM MR. BOYD.

"LUDQUHARN,
" *Sunday forenoon.*

"I am not well to-day and cannot write in either prose or verse, but my Muse menaces you with a long epistle very soon. I wish to have a continued correspondence with you; your way both of thinking and writing is to my taste, and I am too selfish not to try and profit by both, as often as possible. I shall write you the moment I return from Fyvie."

"LUDQUHARN,
" *July 31st, 1766.*

"Health and good morrow Boyd to Beattie sends
And longs to number him amongst his friends,
No formal introduction should precede
The intercourse of those who tune the reed;
Custom's hard fetters ne'er on bards sit right
Who scorn all rules, but of the Stagyrite.

Come then and visit oft my calm retreat
 Void of the paltry splendour of the great ;
 Where freedom with her jovial train resides,
 And without revel decent mirth presides.
 What tho' my table to Newcastle's yields,
 What tho' no grape of Chios loads my fields :
 On wholesome mutton we in peace can dine,
 And Minho's banks shall furnish us with wine,
 Pure Attic salt shall season each repast ;
 And each new day be cheerful as the last."

The first stanza¹ of Beattie's lengthy reply was as follows :

"August 1st, 1766.

"When Boyd invites me, and inviting sings,
 Instant I'd fly (had Heaven vouchsafed me wings)
 To hail him in that calm sequestered seat,
 Where he looks down with pity on the great ;
 And midst the groves retired, at leisure woos
 Domestic love, contentment, and the Muse.
 I wish for wings and winds to speed my course,
 Since Burnet and the fates refuse a horse."²

FROM BEATTIE TO MR. BOYD.

"ABERDEEN,

"November 16th, 1766.

"Of all the chagrins with which my present infirm state of health is attended, none afflicts me more than my inability to perform the duties of friendship. The offer which you were generously pleased to make me of your correspondence flatters me extremely ; but, alas ! I have not as yet been able to avail myself of it. While the good weather continued I strolled about the country and made many strenuous attempts to run away from this odious giddiness ; but the more I struggled, the more closely it seemed to stick by me. About a fortnight ago the hurry of my winter business began ; and at the same time my malady recurred with more violence than ever, rendering me at once incapable of reading, writing, or thinking. Luckily I am now a little better, so as to be able to read a page, and write a sentence or two, without stopping ; which I assure you is a very great matter. My hopes and my spirits begin to revive once more, I flatter myself I shall soon get rid of this infirmity ; nay, that I shall ere long be in the way of becoming a *great man*. For have I not headaches like Pope ? vertigo like Swift ? gray hairs like Homer ? Do I not wear large shoes (for fear of corns) like Virgil ? and sometimes complain of sore eyes (though not of *lippitude*) like Horace ? Am I not at this present writing invested with a garment not less ragged than that of Socrates ? Like Joseph the Patriarch, I am a

¹ The whole epistle was published in a small edition of Beattie's poems, but is not of sufficient importance to give at length here.

² A horse hirer in Peterhead.

mighty dreamer of dreams; like Nimrod the Hunter I am an eminent builder of castles (in the air). I procrastinate like Julius Cæsar; and very lately, in imitation of Don Quixote, I rode a horse lean, old, and lazy, like Rosinante. Sometimes like Cicero I write bad verses, and sometimes bad prose like Virgil. This last instance I have on the authority of Seneca. I am of small stature, like Alexander the Great; I am somewhat inclined to fatness like Dr. Arbuthnot and Aristotle; I drink brandy and water like Mr. Boyd. I might compare myself in relation to many other infirmities, to many other *great men*; but if fortune is not influenced in my favour by the particulars already enumerated, I shall despair of ever recommending myself to her good graces. I once had had some thought of soliciting her patronage on the score of resembling great men in their good qualities, but I had so little to say on that subject that I could not for my life furnish matter for one well-rounded period; and you know that a short, ill-turned speech is very improper to be used in an address to a female deity.

"Do you not think there is a sort of antipathy between philosophical and poetical genius? I question whether any one person was ever eminent for both. Lucretius lays aside the poet when he assumes the philosopher, and the philosopher when he assumes the poet; in the one character he is truly excellent, in the other he is absolutely nonsensical. Hobbes was a tolerable metaphysician, but his poetry is the worst that ever was. Pope's 'Essay on Man' is the finest philosophical poem in the world, but it seems to me to do more honour to the imagination than to the understanding of its author; I mean its sentiments are noble and affecting, its images and allusions apposite, beautiful and new; its wit transcendently excellent; but the scientific part of it is very exceptionable. Whatever Pope borrows from Leibnitz, like most other metaphysical theories, is frivolous and unsatisfying; what Pope gives us of his own is energetic, irresistible and divine. The incompatibility of philosophical and poetical genius is, I think, no unaccountable thing. Poetry exhibits the general qualities of a species, philosophy the particular qualities of individuals. *This* forms its conclusions from a painful and minute examination of single instances; *that* decides instantaneously, either from its own instinctive sagacity, or from a singular and unaccountable penetration, which at one glance sees all the instances which the philosopher must leisurely and progressively scrutinise, one by one. *This* persuades you gradually by details; *the other* overpowers you in an instant by a single effort. Observe the effect of argumentation in poetry; we have too many instances of it in Milton; it transforms the noblest thoughts into drawing inferences, and the most beautiful language into prose; it checks the tide of passion, by giving the mind a different employment in the comparison of ideas. A little philosophical acquaintance

with the most beautiful parts of Nature, both in the material and immaterial system, is of use to a poet and gives grace and solidity to poetry ; and, as may be seen in the 'Georgics,' the 'Seasons,' and the 'Pleasures of Imagination' ; but this acquaintance, if it is anything more than superficial, will do a poet rather harm than good ; and will give his mind that turn for minute observation which enfeebles the fancy by restraining it, and counteracts the native energy of judgment by rendering it fearful and suspicious."

Mr. Boyd's letter was no reply to the foregoing, as when he wrote he had just heard of the death of a dear friend, and was absorbed in grief. On the 27th November, he enclosed to Beattie a copy of verses he had written, "An Effusion of Grief and Heart," which he begged him to make "fitter for publication than they certainly are at present" and offer for insertion to the printer of the *Aberdeen Journal*, who, he supposes, will take notice of his friend Mr. Drummond's¹ death, copying from the Edinburgh papers. He concludes his letter by relating the curious warning of coming sorrow he had experienced :—

"One thing is remarkable. Upon Sunday, the day he died, I was seized with the greatest heaviness and dejection of spirits I ever felt ; nothing could raise me ; nothing could persuade me that I had not reason to be cast down. Yesterday's post fatally unravelled the mystery, and I am convinced that there are in nature unaccountable prepossessions. That I have for you is far from being so. Try to make up Drummond's loss to me, and be assured that none can be more faithfully or warmly your well-wisher than, my dear Beattie,

"Your affectionate,
"CHARLES BOYD."

During the winter of 1766-1767, Beattie led a very retired life, seldom going into company, on account of his health. His leisure hours were still employed in the study of the Italian poets. He read much of Metastasio, and, in his solitary walks, occasionally amused himself by turning some of Tasso's stanzas into English verse. As spring advanced, his health improved.

In May, he brought before the Senatus of Marischal College an application for the degree of Doctor of Divinity for his friend Mr. Blacklock, which was readily granted.

In June, his marriage with Miss Mary Dun, only daughter of Dr. Dun, Rector of the Grammar School, took place. He must have known the young lady well, having been intimate with her family during the nine years he had been in Aberdeen. Sir W. Forbes describes her as a few years younger than Dr. Beattie, tolerably

¹ Mr. Thomas Drummond, of Logie, Doctor of Laws, Oxford.

handsome, and lively in conversation ; and he says that she sang a little and accompanied her voice with the harpsichord. Dr. Johnson gives her a far higher commendation, at least as to her personal appearance. Writing to Boswell, who had introduced Beattie to him, he says : " Of Dr. Beattie I should have thought much but that his lady puts him out of my head ; she is a very lovely woman."

Beattie's married life, destined to bring him so much sorrow and trouble, began auspiciously. In writing to Mr. Arbuthnot, shortly after his marriage, of his present happiness and his "pleasing hopes" for the future, he expresses his regret that none of his Edinburgh friends had been of the marriage party. However, he hopes soon to see them, as he had been delaying a visit to Edinburgh only till he should be able to bring his wife along with him, and they intended to be there in a few days.

In the course of this summer, Beattie had introduced to Mr. Gray his pupil and friend Mr. Williamson, a young man who, having finished his studies in Aberdeen, wished to prosecute them further at one of the English universities. Along with his letter of introduction, he had sent a copy of his "Hermit," which, in his reply, Mr. Gray criticizes very favourably, only objecting to the lines,

"Perfumed with fresh fragrance and glittering with dew,"

remarking on it that "the consonants are harsh and frequent, though the image is good and the words in all other respects well chosen." With regard to Mr. Williamson, he says :—

"I gave Mr. Williamson all the information I was able in the short time he stayed with me. He seemed to answer well the character you gave me of him, but what I chiefly envied in him was his ability of walking all the way from Aberdeen to Cambridge and back again, which if I possessed you would soon see

"Your obliged and faithful humble servant,

"T. GRAY."

Mr. Williamson finally determined on going to Oxford, where he became a Fellow of Hertford College. Afterwards he entered the English Church and for a time was settled in London, until he obtained the living of Plumtree, near Nottingham. Dr. Beattie frequently boarded with him in London, and always continued to correspond with him.

In the end of this year, Beattie proposed that an edition of Gray's works should be published in Scotland, under his superintendence, by the Brothers Foulis, of Glasgow, celebrated at the time for their elegant and correct editions of the classics. Mr. Gray was much pleased with the proposal, but was afraid Mr. Foulis would not like

to take the risk of the publication when he learned that Dodsley was just about to print a new edition in London. If, however, he was willing to do so, Gray would send him, through Beattie, the new poems he was to send to Dodsley, to be printed on condition that part of what had appeared before was omitted. Of these poems he writes: "They are imitations of old Norwegian poetry, in which there was a wild spirit that struck me; but for my paraphrases I cannot say much, you will judge. The rest are nothing but a few parallel passages and small notes just to explain; what people said at the time was wrapt in total darkness." He adds: "I have read with much pleasure an ode of yours (in which you have done me the honour to adopt a measure I have used) on Lord Hay's¹ birthday, though I do not love *panegyrics* I cannot but applaud this, for there is nothing mean in it; the diction is easy and noble, the texture of the thought lyric, and the versification harmonious."

Early in 1768, Beattie had a letter of thanks from Robert Foulis for having obtained Mr. Gray's permission to print his poems. "We have a just sense of the honour done us not merely from the reputation of Mr. Gray with people of taste in every rank, but also from the experience we ourselves have had of the power of his sentiments and description, striking the mind and awakening the soul; sentiments that are at once simple and sublime. . . . As to Mr. Dodsley's printing them at the same time, it is no disagreeable circumstance, especially as he knows they are to be printed in Scotland. This may produce emulation without envy."

Author and publisher seem to have been equally pleased with each other. On sending Beattie the packet containing his new poem, Gray writes: "I rejoice to be in the hand of Mr. Foulis, who has the laudable ambition of surpassing his predecessors the *Etiennes* and the *Elseviers* as well in literature as in the proper art of his profession. . . . You are very good to me in taking this trouble upon you. All I can say is that I shall be happy to return it in kind whenever you will give me the opportunity."

Beattie certainly spared no pains to insure not only the accuracy but also the elegance of the edition. He transcribed all the poems and notes with his own hand, and gave suggestions both as to the type and the paper to be used. The result gave complete satisfaction to Mr. Gray, who writes in October: "It is indeed a most beautiful edition, and must certainly do credit to Mr. Foulis and me, but I fear it will be no other advantage to him, as Dodsley has contrived to glut the town already with two editions."

The sale of the Scotch edition seems, however, to have satisfied Foulis. When expressing to Beattie his pleasure that his work had pleased both author and editor, he says: "As we had more at heart,

¹ Lord Erroll's son.

doing justice to the merit of the poems, than procuring profit, we printed no more copies than what we thought we could be able to sell in our own shop . . . we can, however, from the agreeable reception they met with in Glasgow, afford a little present for Mr. Gray, which shall be either a copy of our folio edition of Homer or a set of our new edition of the Greek Historians, in twenty-nine volumes, as you shall judge most proper or most agreeable to him. This we do not mean as any suitable return but as a small testimony of our respect and gratitude." To this Mr. Gray replied: "Mr. Foulis is magnificent in his gratitude. I cannot figure to myself how it can be worth his while to offer me such a present. You can judge better of this than I, and if he does not hurt himself by it I would accept the Homer with many thanks." To Beattie Mr. Foulis, whose taste and interest in art was as great as in printing, seems to have given two engravings as a mark of his gratitude for his share in the work.

This edition of Gray's works gave rise to Foulis undertaking an edition of Milton in the same style. In the carrying out of this work also Beattie gave valuable advice, both as to the choice of an editor and as to the printing—advice which was gratefully received and in a great measure followed. The correspondence with Foulis on these subjects was not closed till, in 1770, the edition of Milton was brought out.¹

In one of Mr. Gray's letters of this year to Beattie, he gave him the following account of his appointment as Professor of Modern History in Cambridge, October, 1768: "We live at so great a distance that perhaps you may not yet have learned what I flatter myself you will not be displeased to hear. The middle of last summer his Majesty was pleased to appoint me Regius Professor of Modern History in this university. It is the best thing the Crown has to bestow (on a layman) here; the salary is £400 per annum. But what enhances the value of it to me is that it was bestowed without being asked. The person who held it before me died on the Sunday, and on the Tuesday following the Duke of Grafton wrote me a letter to say that the King offered me this office, with many additional expressions of kindness on his Grace's part, to whom I am but barely known, and whom I have not seen either before or since he did me this favour. Instances of a benefit so nobly conferred, I believe, are rare, and therefore I tell you of it as a thing that does honour not only to me but to the minister."

To return to the spring of 1768, Beattie was at that time anxious about his mother. His two unmarried sisters who had lived with her and had cared for her were dead; and he wrote to his eldest sister, Mrs. Valentine, to know what her plans were and how

¹ A copy of this edition was ordered for Marischal College library.

her remaining children could best minister to her comfort. He concludes: "My mother's inclinations ought to be consulted in the first place. Whatever way of life is most agreeable to her shall be so to me. But till I know her inclinations I can say nothing. On my part nothing shall be wanting to render her old age as comfortable as possible."

In June, he wrote to the *Aberdeen Journal* under the signature of "Oliver Old Style," commending to the notice of its readers the poem of the "Fortunate Shepherdess," by Ross of Lochlee; adding a poetical address to the author—the only Scotch poem he ever wrote. His old haunts at Fordoun must have risen to his mind's eye as he penned the often-quoted lines—

"Oh bonnie are our green sward hows,
Where through the birks the burnie rows,
And the bee bums, and the ox lows,
And saft winds russle,
And shepherd lads on sunny knows
Blaw the blythe fussle!"

On the 6th of November his eldest son was born, and, in compliment to his patron and friend Lord Erroll, he named him James Hay. Lord Erroll wrote in acknowledgment: "My brother informed me of your having given your son my name; this new mark of your regard demands my best thanks, which I now pay you with the most real sincerity. The uncommon attention you have paid me on many occasions serves only to make me wish it were in my power to show the real regard and friendship I have for you."

The year 1769 was memorable to Beattie, as in it he finished and sent to the Press his "Essay on Truth," on which the labour of four years had been expended. The information that his correspondence gives on the origin, progress, and completion of this work will be given in the next chapter.

In the spring of 1769, we find him assisting Sir W. Forbes in the composition of an epitaph to be inscribed on a monument that Sir William was erecting to his father's memory. During the summer, he combated his old enemies of headache and vertigo by being as much in the open air as possible and by abstaining from study. In July, he spent a fortnight in Edinburgh, and, while there, saw much of his old friend Sylvester Douglas, afterwards Lord Glenbervie, who had just returned from travelling on the Continent. This he mentioned in writing to Major Mercer, whose wife was a sister of Mr. Douglas.

Major Mercer was at this time with his regiment in Ireland, and Beattie laments his absence and his own loneliness thus: "Alas! my walks are now quite solitary. No more do the banks of Dee

¹ He was still Captain Mercer, but he became Major soon after.

resound to those confabulations, critical, grammatical, philosophical, sentimental, etc., which whilom were agitated between us. I have not seen a man since you left us whose notions of Homer and Achilles were the same with mine."

In the autumn of this year, the Earl of Buchan was in Aberdeen, and Beattie and he seem to have had much intercourse, the Earl taking a great interest in the two works, the "Essay on Truth" and the "Minstrel," on which Beattie was engaged. In the end of the year, Lord Buchan presented to Marischal College, through Beattie, a prize to be competed for yearly by the students¹ in the shape of a Silver Pen. In his letter to Beattie intimating his gift, after expressing his gratitude for the attentions he had received from the College and its different members, which he wished in this way to acknowledge, and at the same time to benefit the community, he says: "I have always thought the prize question with an honorary award affixed to them was rather too little attended to in our Scotch universities. Both the English seminaries have institutions of that kind, and almost all the foreign ones, as well as the Academies of Paris and Bologna, with some others. We have Silver Arrows and Silver Clubs, why may we not have *Silver Pens*? This consideration has prompted me to desire your Society to accept of a gold enamelled box adorned with a garland of diamonds, which encloses a Silver Pen, having appendages for the affixing to it of small pieces of gold or silver, with the names of the gainers of the prize from year to year inscribed upon them, with such reverses as they may choose. I leave the particular plan of deciding the merits of the candidates, the nature and rotation of the subject to be proposed, with the other regulations, to be discussed by your university rules, and according to the pleasure of the Society, and only add that I think it may be a means of improving the style of writing in the English language. . . . By the first safe conveyance I can find, the box etc. shall be sent. It is about a hundred guineas value, and in the inside there is a prize picture in enamel, which was the best at the exhibition in London in 1766, and was done by a Scotchman. On the outside is my portrait set round with diamonds."²

¹ In practice, it was restricted to the students of the junior Greek class.

² The Silver Pen still exists; and the bestowal of the distinction, after long discontinuance, was revived by the Senatus, at the instance of the present Professor of Greek, in 1901.

1765—1770.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "ESSAY ON TRUTH."

Inception and Progress of the Work, traced in letters to his friends—Publishers refuse to take the risk of a work likely to prove so unpopular—Sir William Forbes and Mr. Arbuthnot take the risk on themselves—Book published in May, 1770—Reception by the Edinburgh public—Letters of encouragement—Rapid sale of the work—Introduction to the Duke and Duchess of Gordon—By September, a new and more numerous Edition called for—Writes a Postscript for Second Edition, in answer to the attacks made on the book—Delay in publishing—Second Edition reaches London in 1771—In May, asked to prepare a Third Edition to be published before Winter—Degree of LL.D. conferred on Beattie by King's College, Old Aberdeen—Criticizes Dr. Gregory's writings—Note : Stamping out the Cattle Plague.

THE "Essay on Truth," the work that, contrary to his expectation, brought Beattie honour and fame, was one on which he expended much time and labour. For four years, it had held the first place in his thoughts and occupied the largest share of his hours of study. But it was not a work on which he would have ever engaged, had he followed his own taste and inclination. Metaphysics he disliked, and contention was foreign to his nature. Ever unwilling to hurt others, he shrank from encountering the storm that he felt he would bring on himself by attacking the fashionable philosophy of the day. But in Beattie's character there was something of that rare combination of womanly gentleness and tenderness with manly courage and endurance, which is the ideal of perfect manhood.

He saw, or thought that he saw, the belief in all he held most sacred, most conducive to man's welfare here and hereafter, sapped and undermined by the new philosophy; and, casting thoughts of self behind him, he attacked it in a bolder and more trenchant fashion than any of its opponents had hitherto employed.

Judging by the picture that his correspondents give of the state of society at the time, it was this boldness and fearlessness of attack, and his undoubting assurance of the goodness of his cause, which led to the enthusiastic reception that his book met with from the religious party in the nation.

The wave of infidelity which culminated at the time of the French Revolution was fast rising and threatening to sweep away all that man had held most sacred. In Scotland, the "Zeit Geist" was embodied in Mr. Hume, and his talents and personal popularity did much to recommend it to his fellow countrymen. So great was

his reputation that it was thought a bold thing to differ from him, and those who had as yet written against his views had done so with much respect and many acknowledgments of the greatness of his genius. The friends of religion were depressed. Many knew nothing of the merits of the controversy but from hearsay, not from having actually read and studied Mr. Hume's or his antagonists' works. They heard much of Mr. Hume's genius, and of the homage paid him even by these antagonists, and they had a lurking feeling that the man of genius probably was in the right. Beattie saw this with indignation, he had no respect for genius used in what he felt was a bad cause; and, ever mindful first of his students' moral welfare, he boldly denounced the new views in his College lectures. These lectures were talked of outside the class-rooms, and he found it necessary to publish and vindicate his sentiments. In this design he was much encouraged by his friends Dr. Gregory and Mr. Arbuthnot, to whom he submitted all his writings.

The "Essay on Truth" was begun in the end of 1765 or early in 1766. It was not published until 1770. During this time, it was re-written as a whole three times, and many portions of it still oftener. Beattie spared no pains either on the matter or on the style, and, before publishing, committed his work to the critical inspection of his friends Principal Campbell and Dr. Gerard; begging of them particularly to note if in any instance he had misrepresented his adversaries or mistaken their doctrine.

Its publication put new heart into the lovers of religion. They had found themselves considered as the "stupid party," far beneath the notice of the men of superior ability, whose genius had raised them above the old-fashioned superstitions. They had seen this genius of the champions of scepticism acknowledged by their own leaders. What wonder if at times their hearts had failed and doubts had crossed their minds! Beattie's spirited defiance sounded like a war-trump calling to victory, and inspired them with renewed faith in their old beliefs.

The "Essay on Truth" may not be of much service to the present generation in solving its problems and answering its doubts; but this generation reaps the fruit of what Beattie did for his own time. We stand where we are, only because those who have gone before us have fought and won the battles of their time.

In claiming so much for Beattie, let it not be forgotten how much is owed to others, who in their own way and with their own peculiar talent did as much as he for the same high cause. To Reid and Campbell, greater philosophers than he, and to others of that singularly united brotherhood of distinguished men who composed the "Wise Club" in the then remote northern University City, posterity has not been sufficiently grateful for the support they gave by precept or by example as well as by their writings to religion,

at a time when her foundations were attacked and supposed to be shaken.

The history of the inception and progress of the Essay and its reception by the public will best be given by extracts from Beattie's correspondence.

"January 30th, 1766.

"TO SIR WILLIAM FOREES.

"I have of late been much engaged in metaphysics; at least I have been labouring with all my might to overturn that visionary science. I am a member of a club in this town who style themselves the 'Philosophical Society.' We have meetings every fortnight, and deliver discourses in our turn. I hope you will not think the worse of this Society when I tell you that to it the world is indebted for 'A Comparative View of the Faculties of Man'¹ and an 'Inquiry into Human Nature on the Principles of Common Sense.'² Criticism is the field in which I have hitherto (chiefly at least) chosen to expatiate; but an accidental question lately furnished me with a hint which I made the subject of a two hours' discourse at our last meeting. I have for some time wished for an opportunity of publishing something relating to the business of my own profession, and I think I have now found an opportunity; for the doctrine of my last discourse seems to be of importance, and I have already finished two-thirds of my plan. . . . However, it will be summer before I can finish my project. I own it is not without indignation that I see sceptics and their writings (which are the bane not only of science but also of virtue) so much in vogue at the present day."

Bad health delayed the work; it was not till March 2nd, 1767, that he wrote:—

"TO MR. ARBUTHNOT,

"I have also finished my Essay on—I know not well how to call it, for its present title-page, 'An Essay on Reason and Common Sense,' must be altered. Some persons who wish well to me and my principles have expressed their wishes in pretty strong terms to see this Essay in print. They say I have set the sceptics in a new point of view by treating them without any kind of reserve or deference; and that it might be of use to those who may be in danger from their doctrine to consider them in the same light. However, I am far from being convinced that it would be proper to publish such a treatise, for the principles are quite unfashionable, and there is a keenness of expression in some passages which could please only a few, namely, those who are thoroughly convinced of the truth and importance of religion. I shall be directed entirely

¹ By Dr. John Gregory.

² By Dr. Thomas Reid.

by you and Dr. Gregory, and my other friends at Edinburgh. At any rate, I do not repent my having written it; it has riveted my conviction of the insignificance of metaphysics and scepticism, and I hope it will be of use to the young people under my care, for whose principles—at least, so far as they depend upon me—I hold myself accountable to my own conscience and the public."

In this its first form, his Edinburgh friends had probably agreed with him the Essay should not be given to the public, as he writes to Lord Hailes, to whom his manuscript had been shown, thanking him for pointing out some of its blemishes, and adding, "I have not yet determined anything with regard to its publication"—but that his present plan was to change the title and make great alterations in the work, which, having been written to be read to men perfectly acquainted with the subject, was less clear and systematic than a work intended for the public ought to be.

The re-writing of the whole work on a more systematic plan was set about at once. In January, 1768, he writes:—

"TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES,

"I have for a time laid aside my favourite study, that I might have leisure to prosecute a philosophical inquiry less amusing indeed than poetry and criticism, but not less important."

About the same time, Dr. Gregory wrote:—

"I approve much of your plan, and am confident you will execute it in a manner that will do you credit and promote the interests of virtue and mankind. You are well aware of the antipathy which the present race of readers have against all abstract reasoning, except what is employed in defence of the fashionable principles, but though they pretend to admire their metaphysical champions, yet they never read them, nor, if they did, could they understand them. Among Mr. Hume's numerous admirers, I do not know one who has ever read his 'Treatise on Human Nature.' In order, therefore, to be read you must not be satisfied with reasoning with justice and perspicuity; you must write with pathos, with elegance, with spirit, and endeavour to warm the imagination and touch the heart of those who are deaf to the voice of reason."

By the end of this year, the work had so far met his own approval that it had been sent to Edinburgh for perusal by his friends; as in January, 1769, he thanks Dr. Blacklock for having read over his "Essay on the Immutability of Moral Sentiment" with so much attention.

In writing to Mr. Gray in the following year, when sending him a copy of the work after its publication, he gives some further insight into the causes of its being written and the determination he came to at last of publishing it.

" May 1st, 1770.

"To MR. GRAY,

"The present publication is the consequence of necessity rather than choice. . . . The occasion of my writing of it was this: The business of my profession obliged me when I first entered upon it to be more conversant than I could have wished with our modern moral and metaphysical writers. I had little relish for them from the first, and as I began to understand them better, I hated and despised them the more. Their principles and method of investigation seemed to me to be equally unfavourable to science, virtue, and good taste. I saw with concern that the public in general, and the people of this country in particular, were every day growing more and more attached to them. I also saw, or thought I saw, that those who admired them most understood them least. I used to express myself on this subject with so little reserve in my public lectures, that some degree of curiosity was excited in the small circle where I am known, and I found it was become necessary for me, if I would clear myself of the imputation of being a mere declaimer and retailer of paradoxes, to publish my sentiments at large, with the grounds of them. . . . Whether it be owing to the attachment which many of us have to a countryman, or to something of a minute and sophistical spirit in the genius of our people, I know not; but certain it is that we Scots are at present much inclined to be sceptics and metaphysicians. Everybody here who can read, reads metaphysics. Our writers write it, and our parsons preach it. If you should at any time do my book the honour to look into it, will you favour me with your opinion of the style? As to the doctrine, I dare say we are of the same mind. The style falls far short of my idea of good English; it is often stiff and pedantic in spite of all my endeavours to the contrary. I have indeed studied perspicuity more than elegance, because I know that my doctrine will be most favourably received by those who understand it best. I have frequently given a little in to declamation and something of a flippant drollery, both which I know are unsuitable to a philosophical inquiry. I did this partly to amuse myself and partly to render my subject not altogether unentertaining."

How he expected his work to be received by the public, he tells Dr. Blacklock in a letter of January, 1770, while it was going through the press:—

"I know it will be read by few. Nothing is generally read at present that requires any thought or attention in the reader, except it be in favour of that system which I think it my duty to combat. My expectations in regard to this publication are such that no degree of bad success can disappoint me. I shall be called narrow-minded, illiberal, of a bitter spirit, an enthusiast, and perhaps a Methodist; and my appearing so openly in defence of a cause

which most literary men have given up long ago, will be reckoned such a degree of impudence as ought never to be forgiven. All this I foresee and am prepared for it; but all this, or even worse, will not make me repent of what I have done. I understand my principles too well to be ashamed of them, and my antagonists too well to be afraid of them. I hope those who blame will at least take the trouble to read me."¹

In the summer of 1769, the manuscript was committed to the care of Sir William Forbes and Mr. Arbuthnot to find a publisher for it. But that was no easy matter. No publisher in Edinburgh would undertake the risk of a book in which the prevailing philosophy of the day and its popular exponent, Mr. Hume, were attacked. Beattie's two friends had to have recourse to a species of pious fraud before the work could see the light. Mr. Kincaid, who was one of those to whom they had applied, was willing to publish the book if Beattie took the expense on himself—which his friends knew he would not, probably could not, do. So, they determined to take the risk on themselves.² But as they knew Beattie would never agree to this, they led him to believe that they had sold his manuscript to Kincaid, stipulating that they were to be partners in the publication.

SIR WILLIAM FORBES TO BEATTIE.

"EDINBURGH,

"October 23rd, 1769.

"I have now the pleasure to tell you that Mr. Arbuthnot and I have settled the matter with Mr. Kincaid. He showed me the return he has got from Caddel, who, for some private reasons it seems, declines taking a share in the publication. We could have wished this could have been otherwise, as he would have been a good hand to push the sale in London. Mr. Kincaid expects to

¹ In this letter Beattie says, with regard to the form in which he had sent the essay to the Press, "I have made a great many very considerable additions and alterations, so that I may say of many parts of the treatise, in the Bookseller style, that it is become an entire new work since you saw it. A great part of it, too, I have transcribed for the sake of the style, which I think is now considerably improved."

² "We therefore resolved that we ourselves should be the purchasers, at a sum with which we knew Dr. Beattie would be well satisfied. But it was absolutely necessary that the business should be glossed over as much as possible, otherwise we had reason to fear he would not give his consent to our taking on us a risk which he himself had refused to run. I therefore wrote to him (nothing surely but the truth, although, I confess, not the whole truth) that the manuscript was sold for fifty guineas, and I added that we had stipulated with the bookseller that we should be partners in the publication. On such trivial causes do things of considerable moment often depend. For had it not been for this interference of ours in this somewhat ambiguous manner, perhaps the 'Essay on Truth,' on which all Dr. Beattie's future fortunes hinged, might never have seen the light."
—Extract from Sir William Forbes' "Life of Beattie."

interest another London bookseller in the work, but in the meanwhile we have fixed with Mr. Kincaid that he shall immediately put the book to the press, and Mr. Arbuthnot and I have stipulated with him that we shall be partners in the publication. The sum at which the price is fixed is 50 guineas, which I send you enclosed in Bank-post bills."

Beattie's answer was full of gratitude to his friends for the trouble they had taken; and, as to the price he received for his work, he says it exceeds his warmest expectations:—

"The only thing that displeases him in the transaction is that they are to be partners in the publication, which gives him real concern in case they should lose by it."

When, in the following spring, the book was about to appear, Beattie applied to Dr. Blacklock to write some account of it for insertion in the Edinburgh newspapers. "Puffing," he remarks, "is so constantly used on these occasions that the omission of it would seem to bespeak either total unconcern about public approbation or that the production is altogether unsupported or friendless." Dr. Blacklock consented, and his article appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of January 2nd.

The way in which the publication of the *Essay* was looked forward to and received by the Edinburgh public may best be described in Sir William Forbes's words:—

"At length in the month of May, 1770, Beattie's '*Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*,' in opposition to sophistry and scepticism, made its appearance. As the manuscript had been seen by several eminent men of learning, and as the '*Essay on Truth*' was known to be written as a direct attack on the philosophical principles of Mr. Hume, its publication had been looked for with considerable expectation. The boldness, too, of a writer so little known to the world as Beattie was at this time—for he had merely published a few juvenile poems—in attacking an author so formidable as Mr. Hume, contributed not a little to excite the public curiosity. Mr. Hume was in the zenith of his popularity. After a period of more than thirty years spent in literary pursuits, and after having acted in several respectable public situations to which his reputation as an author had no doubt recommended him, he returned to Edinburgh opulent from a pension which had been bestowed on him by Government, but still more from the fruits of that plan of rigid economy which he tells us he had early adopted and steadily pursued, for the purpose of supplying his original deficiency of fortune and rendering himself independent in the world. Mr. Hume in his disposition was humane and charitable; his temper was mild and his manners pleasing, which, added to his natural ability as well as his great stock of acquired knowledge,

made his company much sought after. The circle of society, therefore, in which he moved in Edinburgh, was not only extensive but most distinguished for rank and fashion and literary merit. Of all this I am a living witness, for I was well acquainted with Mr. Hume, with whom I frequently met in the intercourse of social life. . . . No sooner did the 'Essay on Truth' make its appearance than it was assailed by the admirers of Mr. Hume as a violent and personal attack on that writer."

The correspondence corroborates this. Even Dr. Blair, though he writes that he had perused the book with pleasure, adds, "In some places I cannot help thinking you are too severe on Mr. Hume, and, perhaps indeed from my partiality to the worthy, humane, good-natured man, I wished you had been less so." Such, indeed, was the popular feeling that Lord Hailes, when thanking him for a copy of his "learned and judicious work," yet says of it, "I wish it may have as much fame as it deserves, and be as useful as you wish it to be. I am afraid it is too learned for the first and too adverse to the favourite passion of singularity for the latter."

Dr. Gregory wrote early in June:—

"Much woe has your Essay wrought me. The hero of the piece is extremely angry, and so are all his friends, who are numerous. As it was known that the manuscript had been in my hands, I was taken to task for letting it go to the press as it stands. I have openly avowed everywhere that I had advised you to publish your Essay; and that I thought the reasoning it contained both ingenious and solid; and that it was not only written with great perspicuity but with a spirit and elegance very uncommon on such subjects; and that the importance of the subject justified sufficiently the warmth with which it is written; and that it was no metaphysical disquisition about questions of curiosity, but a defence of principles on which the peace of society, the virtue of individuals, and the happiness of everyone who had either feeling or imagination depended. I wished at the same time some particular expressions had been softened; but denied there being any personal abuse. In one place you say '*What does the man mean?*' This you know is very contemptuous. In short, the spirit and warmth with which it is written have got it more friends and more enemies than if it had been written with that polite and humble deference to Mr. Hume's extraordinary abilities which his friends think so justly his due. For my own part I am so warm, not to say angry, about this subject that I cannot entirely trust my own judgment; but I really think that the tone of superiority assumed by the present race of infidels, and the contemptuous sneer with which they regard every friend of religion, contrasted with the timid behaviour of such as should support its cause, acting only on the defensive, seems to me to have a very

unfavourable influence.¹ It seems to imply a consciousness of truth on the one side, and a secret distrust, or at least diffidence, of the cause on the other. What a difference from the days of Addison, Arbuthnot, Swift, Pope, etc., who treated infidelity with a scorn and indignation we are now strangers to. . . . I am now persuaded the book will answer beyond your expectation. I have recommended it strongly to my friends in England."

Beattie had already heard of Mr. Hume's censure of his book, and remarks on it in a letter to Dr. Blacklock of date May 27th.

"I have heard from very good authority that Mr. Hume speaks of me and my book with very great bitterness (I own I thought he would rather have affected to treat both with contempt); and that he says I have not used him like a gentleman. He is quite right to set the matter upon that footing. It is an odious charge. It is an objection easily remembered, and for that reason will be often repeated by his admirers;² and it has this further advantage that being (in the present case) perfectly unintelligible it cannot possibly be answered. The truth is, I, as a rational, moral, immortal being, and something of a philosopher, treated him as a rational, moral, and immortal being, a sceptic and an atheistical writer. My design was not to make a book full of fashionable phrases and polite expressions, but to undeceive the public in regard to the merits of the sceptical philosophy and the pretensions of its abettors. To say that I ought not to have done this with plainness and spirit, is to say, in other words, that I ought either to have held my peace, or to have been a knave. In this case, I might perhaps have treated Mr. Hume as a gentleman, but I should not have treated society and my own conscience as became a man and a Christian. I have all along foreseen, and still foresee, that I shall have many reproaches, cavils, and sneers to encounter on this occasion; but I am prepared to meet them. I am not ashamed of my cause. You are certainly right in your conjecture that it will not have a quick sale. Notwithstanding all my endeavours to render it perspicuous and entertaining,

¹ This opinion of Dr. Gregory receives confirmation from the observations of Beattie's old friend and critic, Mrs. Arbuthnot, who, in writing her opinion of his Essay, adds: "I ever disapproved of the high strained terms in which both these authors (Drs. Reid and Campbell) mention Mr. Hume's genius, which, in effect, is neither more nor less than bidding him 'God-speed'; for if you allow him a superiority of genius, he and his advisers will laugh in their sleeves, and let you keep the argument to yourselves, of which the generality are neither capable nor care to dive into. God knows my conversation is confined to so narrow a circle as almost to be contracted to a point, and yet I have heard it more than once said, with great triumph, that these authors acknowledge his very superior genius, and would not venture to send their writings into the world till they underwent his inspection; and I have heard others repeat the same thing with a kind of concern which showed it was a stumbling block."

² This has proved true. In the "Dictionary of National Biography," "that he was not treated like a gentleman" is said to be the only answer Hume gave to the "Essay on Truth."

it is still necessary for the person who reads it to think a little; a task to which every reader will not submit. My subject is too unpopular, and my principles such as a man of the world would blush to acknowledge. How then can my book be popular! If it refund the expense of its publication it will do as much as any person who knows the present state of the literary world can reasonably expect from it. By the by, it was extremely well judged not to mention Mr. Hume's name except very slightly in the two critical articles you wrote. People will do me a great injustice if they say or think that my book is written solely against Mr. Hume. Yet many, I am convinced, will say so; and therefore it was proper to say nothing in those articles that might encourage such a notion."

However, as the work began to be known, Beattie was cheered by finding that it was welcomed by many from whom he least expected sympathy. He was in Edinburgh in July, and writes that he found "People in general are much more interested about it than I could have imagined," and "Many who had prejudices against it have been brought to a different way of thinking by reading it." But "Mr. Hume's anger is notorious, and his friends denounce the book as 'a very bad book,' and the author—everything that is ungenerous, unmannerly, and so forth. Notwithstanding this heavy censure I have no reason to regret my having published it. Many persons of great worth as well as learning enter so fully into my views as to like my book the better for those very passages which are thought so exceptionable by Mr. Hume and his adherents."¹

Meantime, encouragement came to him from various other quarters. Mr. Fraser Douglas writes from Deeside: "I have read your book twice over within the week, the last time with greater pleasure than the first. . . . It will be of great service to the interests of religion and virtue. I know this is your highest ambition." In September, Professor Thomas Gordon, of King's College, who had been travelling in the Highlands, writes from Inverness-shire: "I have the pleasure to acquaint you that wherever I have been in the course of my jaunt through the north country, your 'Inquiry' is the subject of conversation and meets with the highest applause from all good judges." So satisfied, indeed, had one gentleman been of the value of the work that he had written at once to a foreign bookseller recommending him to have it well translated into French, as he had high expectations of the service it might be in France. October brought him a letter from Lord Lyttleton, whom Dr. Gregory had already interested in Beattie, and to whom he had advised that a copy of the "Essay" should be sent. In returning his thanks, Lord Lyttleton wrote: "Never did I read any book in which truths of the greatest importance to mankind are more skilfully extricated from the mazes of

¹ Letter to Mr. Williamson.

sophism or where reason, wit, and eloquence join their forces more happily in opposition to errors of the most pernicious kind."¹

Still more substantial encouragement came in the form of the rapid sale of the work. In August, Dilly, who had undertaken to sell it in London, wrote that it had sold well, and that the *Monthly Reviewers* had spoken of it in terms of the highest approbation; adding that he and his brother would be glad to be concerned in any future edition of the "Essay," should Beattie treat with them. In September, he advises that a new and larger edition² should be issued without delay, as the few copies of the work he had remaining would be sold by the end of November.

In the new edition, Beattie wished to add an answer to some of the censures that had been passed on his book, and this he deferred doing until he was settled at home for the winter. Constant attacks of giddiness and headache necessitated his remaining at Peterhead until called home by college duties. On their way to Aberdeen at this time, Mrs. Beattie and he spent some days at Slains Castle, and there met, for the first time, the Duke and Duchess of Gordon, whose friendship, especially that of the Duchess, proved a great solace to Beattie in his later life.

Arrived at home, he lost no time in preparing the new edition of the "Essay," correcting and improving it, and softening or erasing those passages which his friends had thought too keenly expressed. He also wrote what he at first intended should be a preface, but which ultimately took the form of a postscript to the book. It is a spirited defence both of his reasons for having entered into the controversy and of the warmth with which he had advocated his cause. It concludes with pointing out the difference between *personal abuse* and the right that everyone has to comment upon and condemn the writings of any author, if he thinks them dangerous to private happiness and the public good; "but with his private history we have no concern, nor with his character except in so far as he has thought proper to submit it to the public judgment by displaying it in his works." This was the only notice he took of the charge that Mr. Hume's friends had made against him of a personal attack on that gentleman, and also the only allusion to, and implied reproof of, their personal attacks on himself.

The first copy of this postscript was sent to Dr. Gregory, Mr. Arbuthnot, and Sir W. Forbes, for their joint criticism. Beattie begged that they would mark whatever they wished changed and be very free in their censures, as he was to show the manuscript to no one but themselves, and to be guided wholly by their judgment. Sir W. Forbes says: "His three friends could not but remark that

¹ Whole letter given in Sir W. Forbes's Life.

² The first edition was of 750 copies. Dilly recommended that the second should be of a thousand.

the warmth of his zeal in the cause of truth, and his desire to vindicate himself from some attacks which had been made upon him, as he conceived most unjustly, had led him to express himself in some instances with a degree of acrimony which they thought had better be corrected. And they did not scruple to state to him their sentiments on this head with the freedom which friendship permitted and which the trust he had done them the honour to repose in them fully demanded."

Beattie thanked them warmly for their counsel, and expunged from his paper everything with which they found fault. Their criticisms seem to have been on forms of expression, not on the method or manner of writing, for Dr. Gregory writes:—

"It will give me real concern if you make great alterations in your preface. I am well convinced that the high tone you assumed in treating the sceptical philosophy has contributed even more than your reasoning, not only to the favourable reception your book has met with from the public, but to its real influence in bringing that philosophy into contempt and detestation. Mankind are less influenced by what is said, or wrote, than by the manner in which it is said or written. Mr. Hume assumed a tone of the highest superiority in his treatment of the professed friends of religion. He seemed to consider them all as either fools or hypocrites. This spirited attack carried away multitudes, who were so confounded by it that they became incapable of examining its real force. Many of the friends of religion crouched under it, and in truth gave it great additional strength by their extravagant adulation of Mr. Hume's philosophical genius, and of the amazing ingenuity and acuteness of his writings. In short, it soon became the *bon ton* among the learned, or those that wished to be thought so, in this country. . . . The passages I marked were none of them such as would have suggested to me a single idea to your disadvantage," or as being "dictated either by a personal vanity or personal resentment. But I attended to every passage that might be construed in this way by your enemies, and by those who know you less than I do. . . . There is a real permanent propriety in treating certain principles with the utmost contempt and indignation. No fashion can alter this, but fashion may in some degree modify the language in which these sentiments are to be expressed. You may hear what your friends who are more in the fashionable world suggest on this subject; but as to anything else, my sincere advice is, to write from your own heart and feelings alone. . . . Never lose a thought on the trouble you may imagine I take in your affairs. No man feels trouble in following his pleasures, and be assured I cannot feel a more sensible pleasure than in doing everything that shows how much I esteem and love you."

There was considerable delay in the printing of the second edition.

Dilly complains that in March, 1771, the book had been out of print for two months, and now was the best season for publication, yet he had heard nothing from Messrs. Kincaid and Bell of the finishing of the work. In the beginning of April, he hears that the books were to be shipped from Edinburgh that week, "so that it will be ten or twelve days before we can receive them." It must have been toward the middle of April before the book was to be had in London, and by the beginning of May, so rapid had been the sale that already Dilly was writing to suggest that Beattie should be looking over the copy at his leisure, in case a third edition should be needed before winter. There had been no hesitation on the part of the Edinburgh publishers as to taking the risk of the second edition, but there was some delay in settling the price they were to give for it. What was actually given does not appear, but the settlement gave satisfaction to Dr. Gregory, who remarks: "Your friends are pleased with the price of the 'Essay,' not as its value, you may believe, but as a reasonable price for a Bookseller to give. You who do not live much in the world can scarcely conceive it, but I know it to be a truth that the Title of the 'Essay' was considered so uncouth and forbidding that you have lost at least fifty guineas by it. . . . Numbers of its greatest admirers sat down to read it with reluctance. I mention this as a curious anecdote characteristic of the genius of the time. You see the *Monthly Review* has done you all justice; if the *Critical* say nothing, their silence will be expressive in your favour. It will be a strong presumption of a secret influence which yet is not sufficient to make them risk the forfeiture of their character by condemning a book which has received so remarkably the applause of the public."¹ Among Dr. Beattie's letters, there is a long epistle from a young lady addressed to a Mrs. Hamilton, a friend of Lord Kinnoull, from which some extracts may be given as they show that Beattie had succeeded in making his book popular and interesting. "And there's your friend Beattie! He has got a lodgment in my heart. It is in vain to dream of getting him dispossessed. Seriously, I am delighted with our Scottish Socrates. He combats the modern Sophists with all the force of evidence and all the spirit of satire. May his efforts be crowned with success. . . . The charms of his wit and the graces of his eloquence pleased and cheered me during a frightful journey. I travelled through deep snows and rugged roads, and had the prospect of spending the night on the side of a mountain where not a cottage was to be seen. I was often left alone in the carriage with its wheel sunk to the axles in a snow wreath whilst my driver and horses were employed in extricating my neighbour's chaise. Yet in these circumstances I was tranquil; nay, I was happy, for the amiable sage was my companion. His genius, his judgment,

¹ The *Critical* did review it, in the following year.

his benevolent intentions conspired to attract my regards to him, and to render me heedless of the surrounding hideous scenes."

The first public body to recognize Beattie's work and his claim to distinction, was the Senatus of King's College, Old Aberdeen, who conferred on him the degree of LL.D., before the close of 1770. In December, Dr. Gregory congratulates him on his new dignity, "which, from a rival society, does both you and them honour."

It must not be supposed that Beattie did not repay his friends in kind for their criticism of his works. Dr. Gregory sought for the criticism and approval of his young friend before sending his own works to the press, and had written to him in October, 1769: "I have just time to thank you for your very few corrections of my papers. If you had any vanity you would have made them twenty times the number, for I always adopt all your criticisms. Your approbation will make me esteem these lectures more than I have ever done. I knew only that they had one merit, which was their being wrote with a good intention to promote a more liberal spirit among our faculties."

Notes.—The following extract from a letter of Beattie to Mr. Arbuthnot, belonging to this year, dated March, 1770, is interesting, as it shows that "stamping out the cattle plague" was not an absolutely new idea in the north-eastern counties at the time of the Great Plague, when Aberdeenshire set an example to the country of that radical cure. "Everybody here has been dying of a cold. . . . We have also been much alarmed for the horned cattle, but now flatter ourselves that the danger is over, as all the cattle of Portsoy (the only infected place) have been put to death, without any regard to age or sex."

1766—1771.

CHAPTER V.

"THE MINSTREL."

Design and style of the poem in letter to Dr. Blacklock, 1766—Progress of the work in letter to Dr. Gregory, 1768—First Part published anonymously, March, 1771—Second Edition in May—Opinions of the Work—Physicians urge complete change for Beattie's health—Mrs. Beattie and he go to London in July—His reception by Johnson and others—Mrs. Montagu—"Blue Stocking" Society—Mrs. Montagu's first impressions of Beattie—Her plans for his advancement—Proposal that he should accept Preferment in the English Church—Extracts from Mrs. Montagu's Letters—Beattie's Correspondence with Mason as to Gray's unpublished Works—Third Editions of "Essay on Truth" and the "Minstrel," about to be published—Lord Chatham's opinion of "Essay on Truth."

To the "Essay on Truth," it may perhaps be asserted, we owe the "Minstrel." The "Essay" cannot be said to have been a perfectly congenial work, as it was controversial, and only undertaken from a sense of duty by a man who loved peace; while the "Minstrel," or at least the first part of it, was the amusement and relaxation of leisure hours.¹ Casting controversy and metaphysics aside for the time, Beattie turned with relief and delight to the thoughts and feelings of his boyhood and youth; again the contentment, peace and piety of his early home, and his good father's instructions, rose to his mind; again he was the "visionary boy," "fond of each gentle and each dreadful scene"; again in fancy he roamed the livelong night in the shades of Drumtochty Glen, or up the slopes to Stra'finla Tap,

"To survey,
When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim gleaming on the smoky lawn."²

* * * * *

"But lo! the sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean smile."

The contrast between metaphysics and the beauties of Nature heightened these beauties in his imagination, and enabled him to paint them in more glowing colours; while ever and anon the

¹ " . . . My Gothic lyre . . .
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim."
—"Minstrel," Book 1, last stanza.

² The Rev. Mr. Fraser, of Maryton, in his "History of the Parish and Burgh of Laurencekirk," remarks on the "smoky lawn" as well depicting the appearance at times of the "Howe of the Mearns" in Beattie's days, before the land was drained.

thought of his other work would obtrude itself, and a stanza or a line would be employed in denouncing sophistry and its votaries ;

"Hence! ye who snare and stupefy the mind,
Sophists, of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane!"

And again—

"This vale of tears;
Where dark, cold-hearted sceptics creeping pore
Through microscope of metaphysic lore;
And much they grope for truth, but never hit."

While the occupation for the "heart that music cannot melt" is said to be,

"The sophist's rope of cobweb he shall twine."¹

That in this poem Beattie depicts the scenery and aspects of Nature belonging to the home of his youth, the "Howe of the Mearns," was at once recognized, and may still be recognized by those acquainted with that part of the country; and that in Edwin he recalled his own boyhood, also struck those who had known or heard anything of his youth. "Such a boy I have heard were you at school," one of his correspondents writes after reading the "Minstrel." But Beattie himself leaves us in no doubt as to this. He writes to the Dowager Lady Forbes in reply to her questions on the point: "I find you are willing to suppose that in Edwin I have given only a picture of myself as I was in my younger days. I confess the supposition is not groundless. I have made him take pleasure in the scenes in which I took pleasure, and entertain sentiments similar to those of which, even in my early youth, I had repeated experience. The scenery of a mountainous country, the ocean, the sky, thoughtfulness and retirement, and sometimes melancholy objects and ideas, had charms in my eyes even when I was a schoolboy, and at a time when I was so far from being able to express that I did not understand my own feelings or perceive the tendency of such pursuit and amusements; and as to poetry and music, before I was ten years old I could play a little on the violin, and was as much master of Homer and Virgil as Pope's and Dryden's translations could make me."

The "Essay on Truth" was begun to be written in the end of 1765; the "Minstrel" some time in the course of the following year, for, in writing to Dr. Blacklock in September, 1766, Beattie says: "Not long ago I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and to be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me; for, if I mistake not, the manner which I have adopted admits equally of all these kinds of

¹ All these quotations from Book 1 of "The Minstrel."

composition. I have written one hundred and fifty lines, and am surprised to find the structure of that complicated stanza so little troublesome. I was always fond of it, for I think it the most harmonious that ever was contrived. It admits of more variety and pauses than either the couplet or the alternate rhyme, and it concludes with a pomp and majesty of sound which to my ear is wonderfully delightful. It seems also very well adapted to the genius of our language, which, from its irregularity of inflexions and number of monosyllables, abounds in diversified terminations, and consequently renders our poetry susceptible of an endless variety of legitimate rhymes. But I am so far from intending this performance for the press, that I am morally certain it will never be finished. I shall add a stanza now and then when I am at leisure, and when I have no humour for any other amusement, but I am resolved to write no more poetry with a view to publication till I see some dawnings of a poetical taste among the generality of readers, of which, however, there is not at present anything like an appearance."

The composition of the poem made very slow progress. In the following May, Beattie reports to Dr. Blacklock, "My performance in Spenser's stanza has not advanced a single line these many months. It is called the 'Minstrel.'"

However, in January, 1768, he writes to Dr. Gregory: "The first canto of my 'Minstrel,' containing near six hundred lines, is finished and the second begun. But perhaps you know not what this 'Minstrel' is. It is a moral and descriptive poem, written in the stanza of Spenser, but not much in his style. The hint of the subject was taken from Percy's 'Essays on the English Minstrels.' The first canto is a description of a poetical visionary in a solitary country, who derives most of his acquisitions in knowledge from his own observations, with reflections and digressions so contrived to diversify the subject and suggest some useful moral meditations. Here and there, too, is a little touch of satire. In the second canto I propose to introduce my Visionary to a Hermit, who is to give him sundry instructions relating to arts, literature, and human life; he (the said hermit) having been a man of the world in his youth. He will earnestly advise his pupil not to meddle with public life, nor devote himself to the unthrifty trade of the Muses. The young man is willing to follow his advice, but, being stripped of all his possessions by a hostile invasion, is obliged through necessity to take his harp on his shoulders and trudge abroad into the world in the character of a minstrel. Here endeth the second canto, and probably the poem. You will see that such is the nature of my plan, that I may either stop here or proceed to recount the adventures of my pilgrim."

In March, 1769, the first part of the "Minstrel" had been read

and much admired by his Edinburgh friends, who, however, dissuaded him from publishing it in its imperfect state, as he had thought of doing, since the publishers said they would give a higher price for the completed work. But as time wore on and still there seemed little prospect of his having leisure or health to bring to a speedy conclusion a work which was merely taken to as a pastime, Dr. Gregory in the following year urged there should be no further delay in sending the first part to the press.

It was published in the form of a quarto pamphlet, printed in Edinburgh, and it appeared simultaneously there and in London in February or in March, 1771, about the same time as the second edition of the "Essay on Truth." This first edition consisted of five hundred copies. The price paid to the author by Messrs. Kincaid and Bell does not appear. The Messrs. Dilly had charge of its sale in London, and it was so rapid that a new edition had to be issued in May.

In arranging for this new edition, Kincaid was so dilatory that Beattie put it into Dilly's hands and had it printed in London. Charles Dilly, the younger brother in the firm, in his brother's absence "found the value of the copyright to this First Book of the 'Minstrel,' including the profit that the first edition may yield, to be fifteen guineas; should it ever come to a third edition, which is very uncertain, five guineas shall be given. This offer, I think, sir, is to the extent of its worth." The edition was to be one of seven hundred copies. Charles Dilly had written in May; in October, when a third edition was required, Edward Dilly wrote with regard to it: "I will take the whole expense upon myself of printing seven hundred and fifty copies, and run the risk of the sale. I do not expect the sale will be so great of the third edition as the two preceding ones, but I will agree to pay you the same price for the ensuing edition as before, namely, fifteen guineas."

The "Minstrel" at first appeared anonymously. Though by no means intending to conceal his authorship, Beattie did not wish to append his name to an unfinished production.

Immediately on its publication, Dilly sent copies of the poem to the *London Magazine*, and to the *Critical* and *Monthly Reviews*. The two former noticed it in their publications for March. The *London Magazine* gave a long extract, "with a high eulogium of the performance." The *Critical* quotes the account "the author of these beautiful stanzas" gives of the plan of his work; and among other things says: "We shall not object to this Gentleman; his adopting of Spenser's stanzas, animates it with the true spirit of poetry. The following stanzas, in which the poet warns the man of Genius against a desire of wealth and luxury, are characterised with a delicacy, and Imagination and harmony of number, which enliven and embellish the whole book." Then

followed a quotation of the eighth, ninth, and tenth stanzas, beginning—

“Canst thou forego the pure ethereal soul?”

to—

“Return, my roving Muse; resume thy purposed theme.”

“The moral reflections of the author are just and nervous; and his imagery deserves as much praise for the effects which it produces, as for its propriety and animation. It excites a love of innocence, nature and virtue. We hope the author of this first book of the ‘Minstrel’ will be encouraged by the public to continue and complete his poem.” When sending Beattie the foregoing account of the Reviews, Dilly adds, “I shall only observe that if the author’s name had been appended I apprehend the greatest part of the copies sent would have been sold. . . . When it comes to be known, the sale will be greater.”

This probably was the case, as the author’s name was very soon known, and the call for a new edition was immediate. Mrs. Montagu spread the knowledge of the work and the name of the author in London society immediately on its publication. She wrote to Dr. Gregory that she was charmed with the “Minstrel,” and was recommending it to all her friends, mentioning Lord Chatham as one to whom she had sent a copy. She had also brought it to the notice of Dr. Percy, who, she said, was much pleased to hear that Dr. Beattie had so kindly mentioned him.¹ From her friend Lord Lyttleton she had the following note, which she enclosed to Dr. Gregory, knowing that it would gratify him. “I read the ‘Minstrel’ last night . . . it seemed to me that my once most beloved minstrel, Thomson, was come down from Heaven refined by the converse of purer spirits than those he lived with here, to let me hear him sing again the beauties of nature and the finest feelings of virtue, not with human but with angelic strains! I beg you to express my gratitude to the poet for the pleasure he has given me.”

In this letter of Mrs. Montagu, much as she, and—so she assures Dr. Gregory—everyone, is charmed with the “Minstrel,” she already hints at the great want in the poem which prevents its living in men’s memories, as it might otherwise have done. She says: “I admire all the poet tells us of the infancy of the bard; but I should not have been so well satisfied if he had not intended to give us the history of his life. General reflections, natural sentiments, and representations of the passions, are things addressed to the understanding, a poet should aim at touching the heart. Strong

¹ In the preface to the first edition, Beattie says: “The first hint of this performance was suggested by Dr. Percy’s ingenious ‘Essay on the English Minstrels,’ prefixed to his first volume of the ‘Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.’”

sympathies are to be excited, and deep impressions only to be made, by interesting us for an individual ; and the poet, who is a maker as well as a tailor,

For real Kate should make the bodice,
And not for an ideal goddess."

Of this want in his poem Beattie was quite aware, and wrote of it to Lord Hailes after the second part had been published. "Its great fault is want of fable, but that is a fault in the plan, and now irremediable. My intention from the beginning was to give rather a philosophical or didactic than a narrative poem. Whether I did right in this I know not ; but were it in my power I believe I should alter my design."

The first part of the "Minstrel" had the benefit of Mr. Gray's criticism—the occasion, probably, of the last intercourse the friends had together, as a few months afterwards Mr. Gray died.

In the first edition, there was a blank space left in the concluding stanza which Beattie had intended to fill with Mr. Arbuthnot's name, but afterwards inserted that of Mrs. Montagu.

During this winter and spring, the work attendant on bringing out the second edition of the "Essay on Truth" and the two editions of the "Minstrel" in addition to his college duties, told heavily on Beattie's health ; and in March, when his public duties were drawing to a close and a time of rest seemed near, domestic anxiety, caused by the illness of both Mrs. Beattie and her son, prevented his profiting by it when it came. Before the end of May, however, both were recovering, and Beattie said of himself that he was better than he could have expected. But he was obliged to give up all study ; and was even unable to read anything except of a very light nature ; while at times he was seized with great depression of spirits and unaccountable fits of apprehensiveness, to which, he adds, "all people of weak nerves are subject." He had, however, so often suffered in the same way, when he could not so well account for it, that he was not alarmed about his state, and was trusting to his usual remedies, riding and cold bath, to restore his health. These, however, did not prove sufficient, and his physicians urged on him the necessity of a complete change. This led him to think of paying a second visit to London, where his works had been so favourably received and where he would not now be friendless and unknown. His friends eagerly encouraged his going, and sometime about the end of July Mrs. Beattie and he arrived in the metropolis.

Doubtless, he was furnished with many introductions by Dr. Gregory and others ; but the only one we know of his receiving was from Boswell to Johnson :—

"I send you a few lines to serve as an introduction to my revered friend, Mr. Samuel Johnson. . . . The best time to find him at home

is about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Although you may not find him the first time you call, do not give up your purpose of waiting upon him. It was by much perseverance that I attained to that acquaintance with him which improved into an intimacy which I value very highly. . . . I would suggest to you that it may be necessary for you to exert yourself when with Mr. Johnson to lead him to talk of such subjects as are agreeable. You must not be discouraged though he should appear reserved and wanting in some of the commonplace modes of making a stranger easy. Bring him upon something worthy of his ability as soon as you can, and I will venture to promise you conversation superior to any you have ever heard."

Beattie's reception by Dr. Johnson, and by the best literary society of the day, was very kind and appreciative. Intercourse with such men and women as he was now for the first time introduced to, was evidently a source of much enjoyment to him; and it was his happiness to retain the intimate friendship of most of them for the rest of his life. In a letter to Dr. Gregory, he gives an account of his first meeting with Dr. Johnson and several others of those new friends; and also—as there is no rose without its thorn—of the attacks which Mr. Hume's friends continued to make on his character. In reading this letter, it must be remembered that it was written to one who had been as a father to him, and to whom he wrote in the fullest confidence, knowing that it would give Dr. Gregory the highest satisfaction to know that his works were approved of.

: "August 28th, 1771.

"On Sunday, the 18th inst., I dined with Lord Mansfield. His lordship, hearing I was in town, sent me an invitation. He was exceedingly obliging. I have never seen a person of more easy and more agreeable manner. There was no company, so that I had near six hours of constant conversation with him on a great variety of subjects. He praises my *Essay* in the strongest terms. I write, he says, like a man in earnest, who feels what he writes; and he approves me for it. . . . I waited on Dr. Samuel Johnson as soon as he came to town, and gave him Mr. Boswell's letter. He received me with the utmost kindness and affection, and desired me to be with him as much as possible. We dined together at a tavern on Saturday last, where we sat by ourselves from two o'clock till it was dark; after which he introduced me at Sir Joshua Reynolds', where I found that my works were well enough known. Johnson is pleased to bestow the highest compliments both on my principles and on my style. Of the 'Minstrel' he says, there is not a line in it which one would not wish to have written. He is a man of most extraordinary abilities, and, if I mistake not, of great benignity of temper. As to what they say of his roughness, and prejudices against Scotland, I

can only say that I saw no such thing. Had I been his brother he could not have treated me with more attention and kindness. . . . Yesterday I was two hours with Mr. Garrick, who gave me a most agreeable reception . . . I am to visit him at his country house at Hampton, where he expects to see Mrs. Montagu. . . . Mr. Hume's friends have been abusing me in the daily papers these ten days, not in the way of criticism or essay writing, but by inserting lies to my prejudice, in the form of articles of intelligence. They call me an assassin, a plagiarist, a wretched author of a feeble declamatory book, a man who writes against Hume from *personal rancour*, etc., etc. Such abuse seems unworthy of any answer."

Johnson's first impressions of Beattie were as favourable as Beattie's of the great sage. Boswell tells us that when he thanked Dr. Johnson for the civilities he had shown Beattie, he replied: "Sir, I should thank *you*. We all love Beattie. Mrs. Thrale says, if ever she has another husband she will have him."

Beattie's acquaintance with Garrick had begun by his sending him a copy of the "Minstrel," on hearing from Lord Mansfield that he was a great admirer of the poem. In doing so, he expressed his admiration of Garrick's character and talents, and his wish to become personally acquainted with him. Garrick responded warmly, expressing his sense "of the great honour you have done me, but if the true admirers of your prose and poetical talents may lay the least claim to your favour, I am, as one of that number, not wholly undeserving of it." In a postscript, he says: "I left two of your greatest admirers, Lord Lyttleton and Mrs. Montagu, last Saturday morning at Hagley." Beattie did not meet Lord Lyttleton at this time, but he had a kind letter from him regretting that he had not had an "opportunity of making an acquaintance and friendship with a person for whose talents and character I have the highest respect."

Of Beattie's first interview with Mrs. Montagu we have no account; but Mrs. Beattie and he visited her at Sandleford Priory sometime in September.

Mrs. Montagu was the daughter of Mr. Robinson, of Horton, Kent. In her youth, she had lived chiefly with her grandmother, who had married Dr. Conyers Middleton, the university librarian at Cambridge, and author of a *Life of Cicero*. Under this gentleman, Miss Robinson's literary talents were cultivated and her tastes formed on classic models, so that her learning and acquirements, coupled with her wit and elegance, well fitted her for the place she afterwards took in society. She married Mr. Montagu, the proprietor of Sandleford Priory, in Berkshire, and of Denton Hall, in Northumberland; who, at his death, left his widow in possession of both these properties. As their only child had died, Mrs. Montagu

adopted one of her nephews, and brought him up as her son. He assumed the name of Montagu, and became her heir.

In conjunction with Lord Lyttleton, Mrs. Montagu had early published some "Dialogues of the Dead," but her chief work was an "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare," written as a reply to Voltaire's attack on him.

Though Mrs. Montagu's house was a rendezvous for all distinguished literary men and women, there was an inner circle of friends who met there frequently for the pleasure of unrestrained conversation, to whom the appellation of "the Blue Stocking Society" was given in joke by Admiral Boscawen. The original members of this society were, besides Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Carter, Lord Lyttleton, the Earl of Bath, and Mr. Stillingfleet. To the peculiarities of this last gentleman, described by Sir W. Forbes as a man of great piety and worth, and the author of several works, the society owed this name. It seems that Mr. Stillingfleet, contrary to the manners of the day, was very careless as to the proprieties of dress, and was in the habit at these meetings of wearing *gray*, not *blue*, stockings — a fact more observable in those days, when knee-breeches were worn, than it would be in the present fashion. By the appellation the Admiral meant to imply, that in these meetings intellect reigned so supremely, that all the usual etiquette of society was considered too trivial to be attended to. A foreigner translated the epithet into "*Bas bleu*," and this became the regular name for the meetings, which afterwards included many others besides the original members. It is curious that the name of "Blue Stocking," now solely applied to women, should have originated from the eccentricities of a man!

Mrs. Montagu had long taken an interest in Beattie, first from what she heard of him from Dr. Gregory, and then from his works. It remains to be seen what impression personal intercourse with the lowly born Scotchman would make on this talented, high bred lady, accustomed to the most polished and distinguished society in England. Her letters amply show, that not only was the first impression favourable, but that further intercourse served only to deepen and strengthen her regard. Shortly after becoming personally acquainted with Beattie, Mrs. Montagu lost her closest literary ally and friend, by the death of Lord Lyttleton, and Beattie seems henceforth to have taken his place in her interest and friendship. Of her correspondence with him, which lasted as long as they were able to write to each other, many letters are evidently lost, but upwards of a hundred are preserved. These show the closeness and intimacy of their friendship. There is nothing of her most private concerns she does not confide to him; and there is no matter that concerns him in which she does not take the deepest interest. In one of her letters, Mrs. Montagu mentions that she had had a visit

from the ingenious Dr. Wharton, who had expressed his admiration of Beattie's "Essay" and was enchanted with the "Minstrel."

Beattie visited Cambridge on his return journey to Scotland, too late however to be welcomed as he would have been by his friend Mr. Gray. Shortly after he got home, he had a letter from Mr. Mason, to whom Gray had left the charge of his papers. Among them Mason had found letters from Beattie which he wished to return to him. He adds: "I should deprive myself of a very sincere gratification if I finished this letter with the business which occasions it. You must suffer me to thank you for the very high degree of poetical pleasure which the First Book of your 'Minstrel' gave my imagination, and that equal degree of rational conviction which your 'Essay on the Immutability of Truth' impressed on my understanding. I will freely own to you that the very idea of a Scotchman attacking Mr. Hume, prejudiced me so much in favour of the latter piece, that I should have approved it, if instead of being a masterpiece it had only been a moderate performance. I always thought that writer both a disgrace to the nation that produced him, and to that part of ours which patronised and rewarded him. You, Sir, have redeemed the honour of the former, but the other still remains in my opinion an indelible stain. I shall be happy to know that the remaining Books of your 'Minstrel' are likely to be published soon. The next best thing after instructing the world profitably, is to amuse it innocently. England had lost that man¹ who, of all others in it, was best qualified for both these purposes, but who from early chagrin and disappointment had imbibed a disinclination to employ his talents beyond the sphere of self satisfaction and improvement. May Scotland long possess in you a person both qualified and willing to exert his, for the pleasure and benefit of Society."

In Beattie's answer to this letter, he had expressed a desire to know what unpublished writings Gray had left; and Mason replies: "A visit² from you would not only have been pleasurable but highly useful to me, as I should, by communicating to you the papers which our inestimable friend left behind him, have been more certain than I at present am, what was proper to be given to the public. I have but one friend now left (i.e., a common friend to Mr. Gray and myself) whose opinion I shall think proper chiefly to rely upon, and till I see him I shall determine nothing about publication. The person I mean is Dr. Hurd, who at my instance read your 'Essay,' and who is one of the warmest admirers of it. I mention this by the way, merely to show you that a better judge of such things than most in the Kingdom, pays the strongest encomiums to your merit. The most agreeable thing I can do to you at present, I believe, is to give you (what you request) some account of the poetical pieces in

¹ Mr. Gray.

² On Beattie's way home from London.

question. . . . Thus, Sir, I have, with all that freedom of communication which your esteem and friendship for Mr. Gray entitle you to from me, given you a list of what remains of him in poetry. What he has left behind him in prose is too multiform and extensive to be entered upon at present. If you wish to see any of the above mentioned things I will transmit you copies, when you tell me which way I may do it with the greatest safety."

Beattie's health had certainly improved much by his stay in London, yet we find him writing of himself in the end of the year to Sir. W. Forbes: "When your letter came to this place I was employed in the very way you recommend, and had got a-wandering as far as Montrose; from which excursion I did not return until last night. . . . You could not wish me to be more idle than I have been ever since my return" (from England). "I get on horseback as often as I can, and I read and write no more than is absolutely necessary; nor indeed so much, for I am become such a slovenly correspondent that I do not always answer even letters of business. But you will do me the justice to believe that I do not intend to persist in this course of life any longer than is necessary. My health, though not much better nor much worse than when you saw me, is, I flatter myself, in the way of amendment." In the end of the letter, he mentions "The third editions of the 'Essay on Truth' and the 'Minstrel' have been at the press for some time, and Dilly writes that both will be published in a day or two." Among Beattie's letters of this year is one from his old pupil Mr. Williamson, who, writing from Oxford of the very favourable criticism he hears on both the "Minstrel" and the "Essay on Truth," mentions that Lord Chatham had said the latter work was the best book that had been written these dozen years, and that all the world ought to read it.

1772.

CHAPTER VI.

ESSAY CRITICIZED.

Notice of "Essay on Truth" in *Critical Review*—Letter from Garrick—Beattie refuses to apply for a Chair in the University of Edinburgh thought to be vacant—Letters from Drs. Percy and Porteus—Inquiry made through Lord Hailes as to the line of life in which Beattie would wish for promotion—Correspondence with Lord Kinnoull and the Archbishop of York—Fourth Edition of "Essay on Truth," with note on Rousseau's character—Letter from General Oughton—Last letter from Dr. Gregory—Growing popularity of "Essay on Truth"—Letters from Boswell and Creech, the Edinburgh Bookseller—Translation of "Essay on Truth" into Dutch—Letter from Dr. Robert Brown—Extracts from Mrs. Montagu's letters.

THE earliest letter in the correspondence of the year 1772 is from Dilly, relating to a notice of the "Essay on Truth," which had at last appeared in the *Critical Review*. Dr. Carter had written a favourable review of the work, which the editor had promised to insert as the first article in the publication for the month. But, after attempting to alter Dr. Carter's paper to bring it more into accordance with his own principles, he had rejected it altogether, and inserted another, written by another hand, which, instead of putting in a prominent place, "he had huddled in with other trifling articles in the middle of the number."

There is also an early letter from Garrick, in which, after thanking Beattie for a copy of the new edition of the *Essay*, and saying how much he admired and was instructed by the book, he says: "Let me boast of my sagacity, for before I had the honour and pleasure of your acquaintance I prophesied, upon reading some extracts from the 'Nature and Immutability of Truth,' that it would make a noise in the world, and rise into the highest esteem. Behold, my dear sir, the prophecy fully accomplished! And I congratulate you, myself, your friends, and the whole nation, that such a book meets with taste, knowledge, and virtue sufficiently to honour and esteem it. I dined lately with the Bishop of Gloucester, when his lordship and Dr. Hurd spoke with rapture of you and your work; as they struck in unison with my heart, I could not help being very warm and loud on the occasion. May I not venture to thank Dr. Beattie for a most elegant copy of verses upon Hagley Park? *Ex pede Herculem!* I cannot be mistaken, and though I have not thanked you for them before in this manner, my heart has not been guilty of the least ingratitude. I wish it were in my power to send you some verses addressed to me and written by Lord Chatham; they were delivered

to me by Lord Lyttleton ; they are indeed excellent and would please you much, but I have no right to give a copy. When I have, the post after shall convey it to Aberdeen."¹

There was a rumour during the spring of this year that, as Professor Adam Ferguson of Edinburgh University was going abroad, he was to vacate his chair. On hearing this, Mrs. Montagu wrote to ask Beattie if he would accept the appointment, were it in his offer ; and, without waiting for his reply, engaged the Archbishop of York to use his considerable influence in Edinburgh² in his favour. This the Archbishop did at once, but found that Professor Ferguson was to provide a substitute in his absence and that there would be no vacancy. Meanwhile, however, Beattie had declined to become a candidate, for reasons not preserved, but of which, he says, even Dr. Gregory, who had formerly been so anxious to see him settled in Edinburgh, quite approved. The hostility felt towards him by Mr. Hume's friends was probably one reason, as he adds that Dr. Gregory had just written to him : "Edinburgh is perhaps the only spot in Britain where you might be said to be in an enemy's country." In May, Beattie had a letter from Dr. Percy,³ thanking him for a ballad he had sent him, and enclosing a copy of two sermons by Dr. Porteus, afterwards Bishop of London. These sermons, he said, had been preached before the King and had "procured the preacher a degree of reputation beyond that of any sermons preached in my remembrance." In them "you will find very warm but just acknowledgment for the services you have done the cause of truth. The author of them is so much your admirer, that when he found I was writing to you he desired me to enclose a few lines from himself."

Extracts from the enclosed letter of Dr. Porteus :—

"I have read, sir, with singular delight, both your poem called the 'Minstrel,' and your 'Essay on Truth.' It is a very uncommon thing to see so much true poetical invention and such a talent for profound philosophical disquisition united in the same person, and it is still more uncommon to see such fine parts, especially in a layman, dedicated to the support of virtue and religion. I am not at all surprised to hear that your spirited attack on the headquarters of scepticism has drawn upon you the resentment of Mr. Hume and his followers. But whatever unjust aspersions may be thrown upon you by your own countrymen, let this be your consolation (if you need any), that in England your book has been received with universal applause. In the range of my

¹ Beattie disclaimed the authorship of the verses that Garrick thanks him for. A copy of Lord Chatham's verses is among Beattie's papers, but unaccompanied by any letter.

² The Archbishop was a Scotsman, brother of Lord Kinnoull.

³ Author of "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," and afterwards Bishop of Drummore.

acquaintance, which is pretty extensive, both among the clergy and the laity, I have never yet met with a single person, of true taste and sound judgment, who did not speak of your Essay in the warmest terms of approbation. In this they have always had my most hearty concurrence; and I was glad of an opportunity of giving some public testimony of my great esteem for your writings, as you will see I have done in a note, which very honestly expresses my real sentiments, and says nothing more than is justly your due."

The letter concludes with a cordial invitation, that, when next in London, Beattie would pay him a visit at Lambeth, where Dr. Porteus was then Rector. Beattie had intended being in London during this summer, but, at the time he was to have started, Mrs. Beattie became ill and the visit was put off for this year. Probably, he had meant, in those days of expensive postage, to answer Dr. Porteus's letter in person, and only wrote when he found this would be out of his power, as his reply is dated in August. In it he says, after thanking Dr. Porteus for his approbation "of my weak endeavours in the cause of truth":—

"The 'Essay on Truth,' according to my original plan, is only the first part of a large treatise that I had projected, on the evidence of morality and religion. I entered on my second part some years ago, and made a little progress in it. My intention there was to attempt a confutation of the errors which Hume, Helvetius, and other fashionable writers had introduced into the moral sciences. The subject would have led me to the evidence of Christianity; and my own heart would have disposed and my own conscience determined me to do justice to the character and abilities of Voltaire, and other contemporary infidels, with the same freedom and with the same spirit that appear in what I have written against Hume's philosophy. But the wretched state of my health obliges me to suspend for the present all my literary projects. I hope, however, to get better in time; for I am told that these nervous disorders are seldom fatal at my age. I can never forget what I owe to the candour and humanity of the English nation. To have obtained the approbation and patronage of those who have so long been, and who will, I hope, continue to be, the patrons of truth, the great assertors of the rights of mankind, is an honour indeed of which I feel the high value. While animated by this consideration I can overlook and almost forget the opposition I have met with from a powerful party in this country, who, since the publication of the 'Essay on Truth,' have taken no little pains to render my condition as uneasy as possible. In other countries infidels appear but as individuals; but in Scotland they form a party, whose principle is, to discountenance and bear down religion to the utmost of their power. . . . I am much obliged to you for speaking so favourably of the 'Minstrel.' When I published the first book the greatest part of the second was written, and I hoped to have got the whole ready (for I intend only three books)

within a year ; but since that time my health has been quite unfit for study of every kind."

During the spring of this year, Lord Hailes was applied to as a friend of Beattie to discover in what form and in what line of life he would desire promotion. Lord Hailes, on consideration, thought it best to consult Beattie himself as to what answer he should give, telling him that, though he was bound not to divulge the name of the inquirer, he was certain that he was not only Beattie's friend but also one who had power to further his views. After consultation, and in consideration that so many powerful friends were openly espousing his cause, Beattie came to the determination that it would be better not to disclose his views to an unknown stranger. It was not till the following year that he learned that the inquirer was the King, who had already determined that something must be done for him, and had directed the Lord Advocate to learn what he would wish. Mrs. Montagu, from her knowledge of the King's character and modes of action, had surmised, among other guesses she had made as to the unknown inquirer, that such might be the case.

"His Majesty," she wrote, "has all the feelings of a man, and does not think it unbecoming him to consult the dispositions and inclinations of those who are the objects of his bounty. He would wish to know how to make you happier as well as richer. Having a heart full of tender and generous feelings, his Majesty can conceive that parental, fraternal ties and local attachments operate strongly in biassing a man in regard to his situation, beside a thousand lesser considerations that may influence the choice of particular employments ; all those things, he knows, must give place to Royal will if once that will is expressed, and therefore, to leave you more free, wished the inquiry to be made in such a manner as to hinder you guessing the place from which it proceeded, as that would have been a restraint on your inclination. I know many instances of tender humanity in his Majesty, and I protest I do not think him less august for them, so my suspicion in this case is not an affront."

Beattie's low state of health during this year unfitted him for much study or writing, and Mrs. Beattie's illness prevented his going far from home for change and variety, the best remedies for his complaints. Among the few short excursions he made, one was to Edinburgh, and, on his way, he visited the Earl of Kinnoull at Dupplin Castle. There he first met the Bishop of Salisbury, who was recovering from illness or overwork, in his friend's hospitable mansion.

Beattie owed his introduction to Lord Kinnoull as well as to his brother, the Archbishop of York, to Mrs. Montagu. Both brothers entered warmly into her plans for his advancement, and during this autumn he had many letters from Lord Kinnoull on this subject. His replies to these letters and to that of the Archbishop have not been preserved, but their substance can be gathered from the answers

he received. Lord Kinnoull first wrote to beg Beattie to make him fully acquainted with his aims and wishes for the future. These seem to have been, to be placed in less straitened circumstances as to means, that his anxiety for the future of his family, which was aggravated by his poor health, might be lessened; and in a position where he could best employ his talents for the promotion of the highest good of others. At this time he thought these aims could be best attained by his becoming a clergyman of the Church of England. Lord Kinnoull thanks him for having answered him so fully and confidentially, and says he shall now be able to consult with his brother, whom he was about to visit, and would also write to Lord Mansfield on his behalf.

The result of the brothers' consultation appears in the following letter of the Archbishop:—

"BRODSWORTH,
"September 19th.

"As my brother, Lord Kinnoull, has lately communicated to me your letter explaining your aims . . . I desired him to communicate to you my thoughts; which are at least the thoughts of a real friend and well wisher, who has the highest esteem of your merit in the cause of truth. I doubt whether you would be well suited with a lay place, or a pension, or a residence in Scotland. As far as I can judge, the ministry in the Church of England would be the profession most agreeable to your qualifications, and inclinations, but the prospect of fair profit in it ought to be considered, for that is a duty to yourself, and your family. Give me leave, too, to say that there is a prior duty—that is, to your conscience. Though I was educated in the Church of England, yet I have often sifted my mind with sincere and impartial reflection, and with as enlarged views as I could take in of the great dispensations of the Deity, centring in Christ. Upon the whole, I have always thought that the Church of England is the most agreeable to Christian doctrine and discipline, equally distant from wild conceit and implicit faith; free, manly, and benevolent; conducive to the cause of truth and virtue, to the happiness of society and of every individual in it. It is surely unreasonable and unnecessary to trouble you with my notions—I allow it; but this is only a mode of flattering myself with the hope that yours are similar. If such is your opinion of the Church of England, and if it is your upright intention to exercise in its ministry your most valuable abilities and knowledge for the service of true religion, I shall think your early entry into it a happy acquisition. And I would endeavour to contribute, as far as my scanty patronage goes or my friendship and influence extend, that you should enter it with credit and live in it with comfort."¹

¹ The whole letter is in Sir W. Forbes's Life.

FROM LORD KINNOULL.

"October 21st.

"The Archbishop sent me your letter to him, from reading of which I received both pleasure and instruction. It has given my brother entire satisfaction, and he wants only an opportunity of showing the sincerity of his friendship. The sentiments expressed in that letter display many amiable qualities of a well turned mind, as well as a fine understanding. Such is my opinion of your worth and your abilities, and of the service you have done to mankind, that I heartily wish that my brother, for his own sake, may have the honour of introducing you into the Church of England."

During the autumn of this year, a fourth edition of the "Essay on Truth" was preparing for the press. In it there was inserted, in a note, a criticism of Rousseau, which Beattie wrote in compliance with a suggestion of Dr. Gregory, conveyed in the following passage of a letter dated October 13th: "Mr. Langton, a gentleman of large fortune in Lincolnshire, was here lately. He is a sensible, pious man, a great favourite of Johnson, and your warm friend. He told me he was a little surprised at your mentioning Rousseau amongst some of the most respectable writers and friends of religion, whom you contrast with the most celebrated sceptical and atheistical writers. I told him I believed you looked on Rousseau in the same light in which I did, as a real friend to mankind, to virtue and to religion, but bizarre, and unhappy in his temper, led away by a warm imagination and exuberance of genius, and from an unfortunate peculiarity of his mind thinking it right to lay all his scruples before the world. As there is a new edition of the Essay going forward, I wish you would subjoin an explanatory note at Rousseau's name. It would give you an opportunity to paint in just and lively colours that great but eccentric genius; so distinguished by his sensibility of heart, his eloquence and profound knowledge of human nature."

In November, Beattie had a letter from Lieutenant-General Sir Adolphus Oughton, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Scotland, to whom he had been introduced during his short stay in Edinburgh in July. The General expresses his disappointment at having had so little opportunity of cultivating friendship with Beattie; yet, as a lover of truth, he cannot but be warmly interested in the welfare of its ablest champion. So he writes to tell him that he has just heard, from the best authority, that the King had read the "Essay on Truth" with the utmost attention and approbation, and had expressed his intention of bestowing some mark of his royal favour when a proper opportunity should offer.¹ Beattie sent his answer to this communication to Dr. Gregory for his approval, and in reply

¹ Letter given in full in Sir W. Forbes's Life.

received the last letter he ever had from this distinguished man, who had been to him as a father :—

“I shall transmit your letter to General Oughton enclosed in one of my own. Yours came enclosed in a letter from him to me. I am happy to see that your future prospects brighten on you so fast, and hope they will contribute to your health and spirit. . . . Your note about Rousseau, which is an admirable criticism of his character and writings, was sent directly to Dilly.” In a postscript he adds, “I have by much the greatest class this winter I have ever had.” Below the postscript Beattie has written, “This excellent person died 10th February following.”

So simply does he chronicle a death, from the effects of which he never wholly recovered. After —

“ . . . his Gregory had for ever fled,”¹

the “Minstrel” was laid aside and never resumed ; nor does he seem ever to have had the elasticity or youthfulness of spirit again to turn to poetical composition for relaxation.²

Several letters in the end of this year show that the fourth edition of the “Essay on Truth” was called for by its growing popularity. Boswell writes in October :—

“I had a letter not long ago from Mr. Samuel Johnson, in which he says, ‘Beattie’s book is, I believe, every day more liked ; at least, I like it more as I look more upon it.’ Such a testimony must give you great satisfaction. It is a noble evidence both of the real worth and of the literary merit of your book.”

Mr. Creech, the Edinburgh bookseller, who now seems to have taken the place of Kincaid and Bell in having an interest in Beattie’s books along with Dilly in London, in writing to Beattie about the terms on which the new edition was to be published, says :—

“Pray do you know that the Essay is established as a class book at Oxford ? Masters of Arts must stand an examination upon it before they take their degree. I have seen lately several encomiums on it from England, from people of the first literary ability. A high character is given in the foreign journals which I have just got over—one of them will not allow it to be the great Hume, the celebrated historian, whom you have thrashed so severely, but a certain obscure Hume that wrote some treatise on human nature.”

In Holland, where the Essay had many admirers, it was being translated into Dutch. A copy of the translation was sent to Beattie the following year by the Rev. Robert Brown, at that time a clergyman in Utrecht, who, towards the end of the century, became Principal of Marischal College. He wrote in September, 1773 :—

“Along with this you will receive a copy of the Dutch translation

¹ Concluding stanza of the “Minstrel,” slightly altered.

² He wrote only one or two very short poems after this date

of your excellent and much esteemed work. It is now a considerable time since this translation appeared; but as I suppose you do not understand Low Dutch, I preferred sending it by a sure conveyance, though late, to transmitting it through several unknown hands; and till now, no opportunity of the first kind had offered. That the original is faithfully rendered, is all I take upon me to aver from my own knowledge, but am authorised to say, by several gentlemen here, critics in their language, that the translation is elegant and ornate. I was once happy in the thought that this work would have been put in a French dress by a particular acquaintance of mine; but that worthy gentleman is at present so much engrossed by the part he has to act in the education of a royal personage, that he has been obliged to abandon his intention this way."

The following extracts from Mrs. Montagu's correspondence for this year may be of general interest:—

"LONDON,
"May 21st, 1772.

'I was in hopes to have something done among the Great that might forward my hopes for you, but the bustle there had been about the Dissenters Bill so entirely engrossed them that it was impossible to get them to attend to any other subject. Lord Lyttleton distinguished himself greatly in the House of Lords in the affair of the Dissenters. Lord Camden told an acquaintance of mine he never heard a debate opened before the House in so masterly a manner; that he hoped it would be printed, as it was worthy to pass to our latest posterity. Lord Chatham, with whom I dined yesterday, spoke of Lord Lyttleton's speech in the same manner. The Bishops carried the day, but the glory of the battle was not where the victory remained."

Description of Tunbridge Wells, June, 1772:—"The best lodgings here are scattered about on the hills, so that one has not the disagreeable obligation of living in a crowded street. Coaches and chaises, continually going up and down the hill, make the scene appear animated, and the cattle that inhabit it are so used to our carriages as to take little notice of our approach. Our hills are barren, and there is the air of a desert in the scene itself, which, embroidered with splendid equipages and Beaux and Belles tripping up and down in dresses and with airs so alien to the place, make a very singular appearance."

1773.

CHAPTER VII.

BEATTIE IN LONDON.

Dr. Gregory's Death—Letter from Boswell on Johnson's intended visit to Scotland—Dr. and Mrs. Beattie go to London—Extracts from Beattie's Diary on his stay in London, giving account of his intercourse with Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, etc., etc.—Introduction to the King, and private audience with the King and Queen—Degree from Oxford—Sits for his Picture to Sir Joshua Reynolds—Pension granted—Visits to Arno's Grove, Sandlesford, and Bulstrode—Return Home.

THE eventful year of 1773, in which Beattie attained to the summit of his modest wishes as to worldly fortune, and received so many flattering tokens of the esteem in which he himself was held and of the value that was put upon his writings, began with the death of the friend to whom his success would have given the greatest pleasure.

On the 10th of February, Dr. John Gregory was found dead in bed, lying so perfectly peacefully that he must have passed away in his sleep. The sorrow for the loss of this good and distinguished man was universal; but on none except the members of his own family did it bear so heavily as on Beattie. "I should never be done," he writes to Mrs. Montagu, "if I were to enter into the particulars of his kindness to me. For many years past I have had the happiness to be of his intimate acquaintance. He took part in all my concerns; and as I concealed nothing from him he knew my heart and my character as well as I did myself, only the partiality of his friendship made him think more favourably of me than I deserve. In all my difficulties I applied to him for advice and comfort; both which he had the art of communicating in such a way as never failed to compose and strengthen my mind. His zeal in promoting my interest and reputation is very generally known. In a word (for I must endeavour to quit a subject which will long be oppressive to my heart), my inward quiet and external prosperity were objects of his particular and unwearied care; and he never missed any opportunity of promoting both to the utmost of his power."

His friends were well aware how great a blow this loss would be to him, and many wrote to sympathise with him. Among others, Lords Kinnoull and Hopetown, and Mrs. Montagu, shared in Beattie's grief. The last had herself lost a friend of whom she says: "The hours I have passed in his company were amongst

the most delightful of my life. He was instructive and amusing, but he was much more; one loved Dr. Gregory for the sake of virtue, and virtue (one might almost say) for the sake of Dr. Gregory."

Boswell wrote, "Dr. Gregory has been more missed than anybody that I can recollect." But his letter had another object, and that of far greater interest to himself, than the expression of his sorrow and sympathy, however genuine. "The chief intention of this letter is, to inform you that I now seriously believe Mr. Samuel Johnson will visit Scotland this year. But I wish that every power of attraction may be employed to secure our having so valuable an acquisition; and therefore I hope you will without delay write to me, what I know you think, that I may read it to the Mighty Sage with proper emphasis, before I leave London, which I must do soon. He talks with the same warmth of you as he did last year. We are to see as much of Scotland as we can in the months of August and September. We shall not be long of being at Marischal College. He is particularly desirous of seeing something of the Western Islands."

We have seen that Beattie had been prevented the year before by Mrs. Beattie's bad health from going to London, which his friends were most anxious he should do. They thought not only that he would benefit in health, but also that it would aid their plans for his advancement were he personally known to those who had the power to promote his interests. So, this year, shortly after the conclusion of the College Session, Mrs. Beattie and he set out on their (in those days) long journey.

Of this journey and of his stay in London, we have a full account in a Diary, in which, he says, he intends "to set down such an account of facts and such hints of conversation as may bring the most material actions of this summer to my remembrance. Formerly, when traduced by my enemies, I have found relief by recollecting the kindness and favourable opinions of my friends. I shall therefore set down here such flattering circumstances, in regard to public or private approbation, as may hereafter prove a cordial, when there may be occasion for recollecting them."

Though evidently written with no intention of its ever being seen by the public, yet it may be admissible to make some extracts from it, as the circle in which Beattie moved was composed of men and women so well known as to make any revelation of their everyday lives interesting; and also, as in no other way could it be so well shown how Beattie was received by them. The Diary is fully corroborated by the correspondence belonging to the same period.

It commences with an Itinerary in which all the stages of their journey by post chaise from Aberdeen to London are given. They

had left Aberdeen on April 23rd, and had got to Edinburgh on the 28th, having on the way spent two days at Dupplin Castle with Lord Kinnoull. While in Edinburgh, Sir Adolphus Oughton gave Beattie an introduction to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies, who proved a very useful and kind friend. The journey from Edinburgh to London occupied seven days, leaving May 1st, arriving May 7th.

Immediately on his arrival in London, Beattie "set out for Mrs. Montagu's and sat with her an hour or more." Next day, he secured lodgings in Suffolk Street, Charing Cross. "Then sat an hour with Dr. S. Johnson, who gave me a most cordial reception, desiring me to visit him often. At three I waited on Lord Dartmouth, who received me in the most friendly manner. . . . He told me of the King's good will towards me, and that Lord North was my friend.

"*May 9th.*—Dined at Mr. Langton's, where were Mr. Boswell, Dr. Johnson, and several others.

"*May 10th.*—At seven went to an Assembly, or conversation, or Rout, at Mrs. Montagu's. Much company. Had a good deal of chat with some of the ladies, and Lord Lyttleton and Mr. Carter. Mrs. Montagu proposes I should publish a quarto volume of Essays, by subscription, by which she thinks that £800 or £1,000 might be raised. Was introduced to Ramsay, the painter, at Mrs. M.'s.

"*11th.*—Went to St. Paul's to the rehearsal of the music for the Feast of the Sons of the Clergy. Tedious service, but music good and well performed. Too much anthem and too little variety.

"*13th.*—Breakfasted with Dr. Wharton, who went with me to St. Paul's, where I heard the music repeated and an excellent sermon. A ticket was sent me, desiring me to be at the Feast for the Sons of the Clergy, but I could not go. Was at a meeting of the Royal Society. The president, Sir J. Pringle, saw me and gave me a very kind invitation to see him on Sunday evening. Supped in the London Coffee house with Drs. Calder, Price, Jeffries, etc. Much talk about Phipp's intended expedition to the North Pole, and about Dr. Hawkesworth, who has received for his history of Bank's and Lolander's voyage no less a sum than £6,000.

"*14th.*—Called on Mr. Langton, who took me to Mr. Edmund Burke, to whom he introduced me. Mr. Burke gave me as kind a reception as I ever received from anybody. He says that my postscript¹ is one of the most manly and most masterly pieces of eloquence he has ever seen. He is to call for me soon and wishes to see me often. Mr. Burke is one of the most agreeable men I have ever

¹ Postscript to second edition of "Essay on Truth."

seen. Fine accomplishments, extreme quickness, with humour and distinct elocution. . . . Mrs. Beattie and I dined with Sir David and Lady Lindsay. Mrs. Montagu sent her coach for Mrs. B. and me at seven. We sat with her and Mrs. Carter and Lord Lyttleton till eleven. Much agreeable conversation about Homer, Virgil, etc. Mrs. Montagu still urges me to the subscription scheme. Wishes me to purchase, from the Booksellers, leave to print an edition of the 'Essay on Truth,' and to place it in the proposed quarto volume.

"15th.—Mrs. B. and I dined with Mrs. Montagu . . . Lord Lyttleton came in the evening, being, he said, anxious to renew the agreeable conversation he had with us last night, but Mrs. M. being engaged we had to separate at nine. His lordship put in my hands a paper of objections which he had made to Lord Monboddo's book, together with Lord M.'s answers. Some of these objections are to the same purpose with the remarks I made in my Latin discourse on the origin of language. The answers are inaccurate and unsatisfying.

"16th.—Mr. Langton tells me that Lord Hailes had told him, that he (Lord Hailes) had received a letter from Bishop Warburton, in which it was said that Lord Chief Justice Wilmot had recommended my book to some leading men at Oxford, in consequence of which, the candidates for certain degrees were required, in order to their qualification, to be well versed in the arguments which I have urged in the cause of truth. Mr. Burke called on me this day; gave Mrs. B. and me a very kind invitation to visit him to see some pictures, among which was Venus, newly risen from the sea, a most admirable performance. Conversation on that idea of *general excellence* which poets and painters ought to imitate. No description just, either in poetry or painting, in which any circumstances are introduced which an *interested* spectator would not take notice of. 'If' said Mr. Burke, 'a man should tell me that he had been to see Dr. Beattie, and that he had a pair of old-fashioned buckles in his shoes, I would say that man had not seen Dr. Beattie, but a pair of shoe buckles.' Dined with Mr. Strachan (the printer). He says my Essay has knocked up the sale of Mr. David Hume's essays, which he has access to know, being a proprietor of those essays. He showed me several letters from Mr. D. Hume, by which that author appears to have become not a little peevish. He (Mr. Hume) speaks of the whole English nation as a factious, stupid people, with whom he has long been disgusted; says there is not an Englishman now alive capable of continuing his History, and that the best book (bad as it is) which any Englishman has published these thirty years, is 'Tristram Shandy.' He wishes success to Sir J. Dalrymple and Mr. Macpherson as the continuators of his History, says that both are hot-headed, that Macpherson has spirit and style, that

the knight has spirit but no style. Mr. Strachan says that nothing ever gave David Hume so much pain as the success of Dr. Robertson's *Histories*; that Mr. Caddel and he (Strachan), for fear of offending him, were obliged to print some editions of Robertson's *History of Scotland*, without alteration of date, as Hume could not bear to think that the sale of the work had been so extensive as it really was.

"17th.—Mrs. Montagu told me some time ago, that Mr. Thomas Townshend¹ had made honourable mention of my name lately in the House of Commons, and in such terms (added she) as I should have suggested if I had been his prompter. He said, the Scots were not all freethinkers, that Dr. Beattie's book against Hume deserved to be in everybody's hands, that it had been very useful in undeceiving the world in regard to that infidel writer, who, notwithstanding the pernicious tendency of his works, enjoyed a great pension while his opponent was altogether neglected.

"19th.—Dr. Pery paid me a visit and took me with him to his apartment in Northumberland House. His books are a very curious collection; he has all those (excepting two) that are said to have been in Don Quixote's library, and a great many curious old books of different kinds. He showed me some translations of Spanish ballads, which he intends to publish.

"22nd.—I went to Mrs. Montagu's at three, who carried Mrs. Carter and me in her coach to dine with Lady Mary Coke, near Kensington. Country very beautiful and blooming since the late rains. Lady Mary's seat is delightfully situated on a rising ground. Her ladyship is the daughter of the great John Duke of Argyle, and was married to a Lord Coke, who has been dead many years. She is a most agreeable, and still a beautiful woman, seemingly not above thirty-six. She received me with the utmost politeness. . . . Most of the conversation was in French, there being present a Swiss general and a French gentleman, Monsieur de Luc. Everybody seems pleased at Lord Clive's being so honourably acquitted by the House of Commons yesterday. We sat in Lady Mary's till after sunset. Mrs. Montagu took Mrs. Carter and me back to town in her coach and introduced me at the house of a Mr. Amicot, a gentleman of great worth and a good friend of mine. There was in his house the Duchess of Queensbury, a fine old lady. I got home about eleven.

"23rd.—Mrs. Beattie and I dined with the Duchess of Portland, along with Mrs. Montagu and Lord Lyttleton. Her Grace was extremely kind, and insisted on our repeating our visit.

"24th.—This day I asked Dilly what I should give him to allow me to publish a splendid quarto edition of the '*Essay on Truth*,'

¹ Afterwards Lord Sydney.

with some other essays, at my own expense and on my own account. His answer was, that as such a thing might be profitable to me, he would not oppose it, and should ask nothing but a few of the quarto copies. [I think myself obliged to him for this piece of politeness. . . . Dilly says, that a pamphlet will probably be published against me in a few days: that the author by letter proposed that he should be one of the publishers, but as he refused to tell his name, even to the bookseller, Mr. Dilly did not choose to have anything to do with him. . . . I sat two hours with Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was in exceedingly good humour and spirit; showed me some Latin verses he had lately composed, on finishing the last edition of his Dictionary, and allowed me to take a copy.

"25th.—Dined, drank tea and supped in Mr. John Hunter's. He showed us his anatomical curiosities, which are very numerous and well arranged. He seems to be very profoundly skilled in comparative anatomy. He is of opinion that the negroes are removed from us one degree in the scale of animals, and approach towards the monkey; but his reasons are not satisfying. The tendency of the negro's skull, when placed on a table, to lean backwards, the flatness of the nose, and the bluntness of the chin, may be the effect of a different treatment when they are children. Everybody knows that in infancy the skull will receive almost any shape. . . . Mrs. Montagu begins to seem averse to my entering the Church. She thinks I may do more service to religion as a layman: it might look as if I had written in defence of the truth merely for the sake of profit. This had been my own opinion for some time.

"26th.—I went to Mr. Johnston's at the stage door of Drury Lane Theatre, and took out two tickets for the play to be acted this evening towards raising a fund for superannuated players. It is the 'History of King Lear,' the part 'Lear' by Garrick. This play being advertised a month ago, all the places were taken long before I thought of making application, and if it had not been by means of Mr. Garrick himself I could not possibly have got places, as the demand for them was prodigiously great. . . . Our seats were as convenient as we could wish. Garrick's action in this most difficult character transcends all praise. The many tears shed by the audience bore ample testimony to his and to Shakespeare's merit. After the play he spoke an occasional epilogue with infinite propriety and humour. A French gentleman, Monsieur de Luc, sat next me at the play, and was transported with admiration of Garrick's action. Mrs. B. and I came home when the tragedy was over; and got home about eleven, Mr. T. Beauclerk having done us the favour to lend us his coach.

"28th.—Mrs. Beattie and I dined at Sir W. Mayne's. . . . A good deal of company in the evening." Among them he mentions "Mr. Peckard, a clergyman whom I formerly met at Dr. Porteus's. Mr. Peckard and Mr. Agar are very anxious that the University of Oxford should make me Doctor of Laws by diploma.

"29th.—Dr. Porteus sent his chariot for me, in which I went to his house in Lambeth, from whence he took me to Lambeth Palace and introduced me to the Archbishop of Canterbury, this being his public day. His Grace received me very kindly, and approved highly of my writings and desired me to persist in my endeavour to vindicate moral and religious truth. There was a good deal of company with the Archbishop, the Bishops of St. David's and Chichester, Dr. Parker, Rector of St. James's, Dr. Halifax, Professor of Law at Cambridge, and several others. . . . Dr. Halifax was very earnest with me that I should visit him at Cambridge on my return north. . . . He is a man of very easy manners, talks a good deal, and seems to have a very good understanding. A great deal of freedom at dinner, the conversation easy and polite, and everybody had a share.

"June 1st.—Mrs. Vesey told me that the late Lord Chesterfield was the first person who recommended my *Essay* to her."

Miss Reynolds, Sir Joshua's sister, had been warmly interesting herself in Beattie's affairs, and on the 3rd of June he had called to thank her, when "She asked it of me as a favour to sit to her for my picture, to which I consented most thankfully. I sat to her about half an hour. She wishes me to engage her brother, Sir Joshua, to take another picture of me, and is sure he will do it if he can by any means find time.

"Mrs. Beattie and I supped in Mrs. Vesey's, where there was much company, Mrs. Montagu, Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, Mr. John Pitt and his lady, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mrs. Edmund Burke, Mr. William Burke, a brother of Edmund's, etc.; a great deal of cheerful and entertaining discourse. I had much conversation with Mr. Garrick, who was overjoyed to see me, expressed much regret at having missed me so often, and asked me to breakfast with him as soon as I could. He made me very happy by saying he had been to visit Johnson on this day, who is much better, and is gone to Streatham. On this occasion he repeated a speech that Johnson once made to him in regard to my book on Truth. Garrick had been praising it highly as a most excellent work, which he always does when he speaks of it. Johnson seconded him warmly. 'Why, sir, there is in it a depth of reasoning and a splendour of language which make it one of the first-rate productions of the age.' These words Garrick repeated exactly in Johnson's manner, which he imitates most perfectly. The company sat till late. Much discourse on painting and poetry and other interesting subjects. Sir Joshua Reynolds is

of opinion that our ideas of beauty arise from habit; he tells me he is the author of three papers on painting in the second volume of the 'Idler,' which indeed I had guessed before.

"*June 4th.*—On my way home I called for Mr. Strachan. He entertained me with a large parcel of Bishop Warburton's letters which he put into my hand. They are generally short and relate to business, but there are excellent strokes in some of them. Speaking of the Church of Scotland he says: 'It is just now divided into two parties, one of which, in the extreme, is made up of sober pagans, and the other of wild fanatics. He says it is a great advantage to the English clergy that they have objects of ambition to make them exert their talents; it is true he says those objects are never bestowed on merit, but the view of them keeps up the spirit of the clergy, as the hope of the ten thousand prize in the lottery makes every cobbler in the kingdom an adventurer.' Speaking about the confusions about Wilkes, he says: 'Our constitution, like a watch with a broken spring, is running down to ruin and silence with great noise and rapidity.' Strachan assures me that Bishop Warburton is in conversation a most entertaining and agreeable companion, and so perfectly modest and well bred that you can hardly get him to contradict you. The same account I have formerly heard of him from Lord Mansfield. . . . Yesterday Mr. Dilly put into my hands a pamphlet written against me, just now published. It is diffuse, perplexed, and, to me, often unintelligible. I have not as yet found in it anything that deserves notice from me, for the author either does not, or will not, understand me. Very injudiciously for his own cause, he runs off from his subject and rails against the Church of England, and bishops, and articles of faith, and sometimes (if I understand him) at Christianity.

"*June 5th.*—After breakfast I went to Sir Joshua Reynolds'; he showed me his pictures, and made me the present of a discourse which he lately delivered before the Royal Academy. I had a great deal of conversation with him. It is, he tells me, the study of Nature in all its varieties that enables him to give that variety of graceful and expressive attitudes to his pictures, in which, in my opinion, no painter, ancient or modern, has ever equalled him. Other painters too often imitate one another; he always imitates Nature.

"*June 6th.*—In the morning I attended Divine Service in Westminster Abbey. Called on the Archbishop of York at seven in the evening, found him busy in showing certain drawings to his children and taking occasion from them to convey moral instruction, which, his Grace told me afterwards, he always chooses to do in an oblique manner, yet so as to leave a lasting impression. He made me a present of three prints, one of himself, one of his daughter, deceased, and one of his two sons, from a picture by West. . . . At nine I left

him and returned to Mrs. Montagu's, with whom I found Lord Lyttleton and the celebrated General Paoli, the Corsican. Paoli is of a fair and florid complexion with dark and piercing eyes, and about five feet nine inches tall (as I guess); strongly made, but not in the least clumsy. He uses many gestures in his conversation as other Italians do, but they are not finical, but there is a freedom and dignity in his whole manner, equally free from assurance on the one hand, and from affected reserve on the other. He looks and speaks like one who has been accustomed to command, yet there is nothing rough or assuming about him, but on the contrary the utmost politeness. There is often a smile on his countenance, but I never observed that it broke out into a laugh. His features are very regular and agreeable. The conversation was all in French; he spoke a great deal, and speaks with great emphasis. The subject was the customs of the Sicilians and the appearance of Etna and other curiosities of the country.

"*June 11th.*—Sat a while with Miss Reynolds, and left Mrs. Beattie with her, whose profile Miss Reynolds took, placing her in a picture in a group of ladies at work.

"*June 14th.*—Attwelve Miss Reynolds called on Mrs. Beattie and me and took us in her brother's coach to Richmond, where, in Sir Joshua's new house, we dined with Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds, Mr. and Mrs. Bunbury, Miss Horneck and her mother, Mrs. Burke, Messrs Edmund, William and Richard Burke, and Dr. Goldsmith. Day clear and windy. Rain in the evening. Charming walks and prospect. Much cheerful conversation. I took a long walk in the evening with Edmund Burke in Richmond Park, and had much conversation with him on a variety of subjects, critical, moral and political. He praises Dr. Robertson's style, but he says he writes like a man who composes in a dead language which he understands but cannot speak; Mr. Hume's he thinks more easy and flowing, but blames it for being too much Frenchified, not only in particular phrases but also in the general structure; I remember Johnson and Mrs. Montagu to have spoken of it in the same terms; and Garrick told me that when he first saw the pamphlet published by Hume against Rousseau he would not believe that Hume's letters were authentic, but supposed them translations from the French, till the bookseller satisfied him by evidence. . . . Miss Reynolds told me to-day some particulars of Goldsmith. He, it seems, not only is, but even acknowledges himself to be, envious of all contemporary authors whose works are successful, and has several times spoken with some peevishness of the attention that has been shown me in England. 'Why should he have a pension?' he said, one day when I happened to be mentioned. 'For writing the "*Minstrel*"? then surely I have a better claim.' One of the company told him that my claim was founded on the '*Essay on Truth*,' a work of public utility and which had been

attended with danger or at least inconvenience to the author. Here Foote, the player, interposed. 'I have read,' said he, 'the "Minstrel," and think it an excellent poem; but the author of the "Essay on Truth" is peculiarly entitled to public encouragement, for writing one of the best and most ingenious books which have appeared this age.'

While Beattie's days were thus passed in a constant succession of engagements—for he seldom dined, took tea, or supped but in company, and, the fashionable hour of dinner being three o'clock, tea and supper often formed a separate engagement—his friends were untiring in their efforts to procure for him such recognition for his services to the cause of religion as they considered him entitled to. Many of the bishops were very anxious that he should find this recognition in the Church of England, but had no living vacant which they could offer him at once. Others of his friends, particularly Lord Mansfield, objected to his entering the Church lest it should be said he did so merely from mercenary motives. So, it was agreed by both parties that, in the meantime, their efforts should be directed to procuring for him a pension from the King.

In those days, it was not considered derogatory to a literary man to accept such a pension: Dr. Johnson had one of three hundred a year. Nor did politicians object to these pensions. Burke had said to Beattie, "Pensions that are given to men like you are not those we complain of; for such pensions are highly proper, and do honour to those that bestow them; but we complain of those that are given in order to corrupt, and to make the Parliament the tool of the administration."

But, though willing to accept a pension from Government, any offer of pecuniary assistance from private sources Beattie gratefully but firmly declined. Such an offer was made him by the Dowager Duchess of Portland. During the long delay which occurred before it was officially intimated to him that a pension had been given him, his friends felt that his expenses in London must be more than his small means could well meet. This feeling prompted the Duchess, when Dr. and Mrs. Beattie were visiting her at Bulstrode, to beg him in a kind and delicate fashion to accept a trifle that she held in her hand (a hundred pounds in bank notes), saying she feared his present expenses might embarrass his affairs. Beattie describes himself as "greatly disconcerted" by her generous offer, which, however, he managed to decline in a way that she said raised him in her esteem. He also assured her that by frugality at home and the price he had got for his writings he had sufficient to defray his expenses.

Another offer he declined came from the Queen. Lady Mayne,¹

¹ Afterwards Lady Newhaven.

a lady who vied with Mrs. Montagu in her interest in Beattie and his fortune, had written, of her own accord and without the knowledge of Beattie or his friends, to Dr. Majendie, at that time Prebendary of Worcester, the Queen's instructor in French and English, asking him to acquaint her Majesty with Beattie's family circumstances, his services to the cause of truth, and the treatment he had received from a powerful party in Scotland, and to recommend him as a proper object of Royal beneficence.

Dr. Majendie readily acceded to Lady Mayne's request, and the Queen, who was well acquainted with Beattie's writings, received the application in his favour very graciously, and wished it were in her power to do him a favour. She commissioned Dr. Majendie to ask him whether he would be willing to receive from her any pecuniary acknowledgment, in the way of a private donation.

At the time Dr. Majendie introduced himself and his commission, Beattie had good reason to suppose that the pension was about to be granted, as Lord Dartmouth, at the request of the King, was to present him at the first levée. He, therefore, begged Dr. Majendie to express to her Majesty his gratitude and the sense of the honour she had done him, but, as he was in hopes of receiving something from the King, he would not wish her Majesty should take the trouble of making good her intention in regard to him.

The Queen was pleased with the manner in which her bounty was declined, and said she would take an early opportunity of speaking of Beattie to the King. . . . She also desired Dr. Majendie to tell Beattie that she had read his book with great attention, that she highly approved of it and had conversed with the King upon it several times.

Dr. Majendie's opinion of his Royal pupil was a high one. He described her to Beattie as "a very sensible and truly religious woman," and said that "both the King and she are attentive to the education of their children to a degree which nothing can exceed."

It had been intended that Beattie's presentation to the King should take place early in June, but various delays prevented it till the last day of the month. Lord Dartmouth introduced him and he was very graciously received, the King conversing with him for some time, though the levée was a crowded one. The subject of his conversation was almost entirely the "Essay on Truth." The King said that he had read it, and approved of it greatly, that it was a work that was much wanted and, he was sure, would do a great deal of good. He also inquired as to the length of

time Beattie had been engaged in writing it, and whether any answer had been given to it. Among others with whom Beattie conversed at the levée was Lord North,¹ to whom he had already been introduced.²

After the levée was over, Lord Dartmouth told him he had urged Lord North to bring "my matters to a speedy conclusion"; to which he replied that some other matters of a similar kind would be settled at the same time, and that could not be done for some days.

The next morning, Dr. Majendie called early to ask if Beattie had heard anything definite as to what was to be done for him. On his replying in the negative—"Then I have some news for you that will give you pleasure. The Queen told me yesterday that everything with regard to you is settled, and that his Majesty is to allow you a pension of two hundred pounds a year." The Queen had laid no injunctions of secrecy on Dr. Majendie, but he warned Beattie to tell no one but his wife, as "authoritative intelligence of things of this nature is always supposed to come from the minister."

Seven weeks, however, elapsed before the official announcement of his pension was made. Fortunately, the time was enlivened by many pleasant incidents and much kindness from friends. He had been advised by Lord Dartmouth to remain within a short distance of London until his business was settled, so he could not visit Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford as she wished; but the greater part of this time of waiting was spent with Sir William and Lady Mayne, at Arno's Grove, their country residence, ten miles from London. A short visit was also paid to the Dowager Duchess of Portland. Her Grace's residence, Bulstrode, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-one miles west from London on the Acton and Uxbridge Road, Beattie describes as "a most beautiful place, with a great variety of hill, grove and lawn; the house very spacious and magnificently furnished; with a most princely economy." There Dr. and Mrs. Beattie were received by the Duchess and her friend Mrs. Delany "with every mark of the kindest politeness," and were introduced to Dr. Hurd³ and Mr. Fred Montagu, the other visitors in the house. Of this visit the following are a few extracts from the journal:—

"Dr. Hurd, a most agreeable man; a great deal of unaffected gravity mixed with singular ease and sweetness of manner."

¹ At that time, Prime Minister.

² Lord Dartmouth had given Beattie instructions as to the dress to be worn at the levée, and he got for the occasion a suit of "pale blue clothes of the present court fashion," and a bag wig which cost £1 11s. 6d. A friend lent him a sword and buckles.

³ Afterwards Bishop of Worcester.

"*Sunday*.—Had a great deal of conversation in the morning with Dr. Hurd. We attended prayers in the Duchess's Chapel, where Dr. Hurd preached an excellent sermon. After dinner the Duchess showed us several curiosities, particularly an original letter of Pope in his own handwriting, a letter from Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, one from the Earl of Essex in the time of Queen Elizabeth, one from Sir Francis Drake, etc., a curious missal richly illuminated and adorned with pictures, and a Prayer Book of Queen Elizabeth's beautifully written with her Majesty's own hands. I am more than pleased with Dr. Hurd's conversation, which rather heightens the ideas which his writings had led me to form of his taste. He is quite positive that a great part of Ossian's poetry is not authentic, and mentions one argument which I did not before think of, viz., that in every book of great antiquity, especially when written in a barbarous age and nation, there always have been obscure allusions and passages not to be understood, whereas in Ossian there are none such. Mrs. Delany showed us many of her drawings, which are truly excellent; they are mostly landscapes."

The suggestion that the University of Oxford should confer a degree on Beattie, first made by Mr. Peckard, had been readily taken up by Dr. Markham, Bishop of Chester and Dean of Christ's Church,¹ and others of the university, and it had been arranged that this honour was to be conferred on him at the approaching *Encœnia*, when Lord North was to make his first public appearance as Chancellor of the University. It had been intended that it should be a diploma degree, by which he would have been entitled to all the rights and privileges of the university. But, just before leaving town for Arno's Grove, Beattie heard from the Bishop of Chester that the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford "is of opinion that if the conferring of a Doctor's degree on me was proposed in Convocation it would be refused, chiefly (if I understand him aright) on the score of my being a Presbyterian." This news surprised Beattie, as he had specially begged his friends if there was likely to be any opposition to the proposal, not to bring it forward, and had been assured, by several of the university authorities most likely to be well informed, that there would be none. He was more vexed for the seemingly fruitless trouble his friends had had than for any disappointment to himself, though he would have valued the degree as a mark of the university's approbation of his writings which might have helped to make them of more service to the cause they were intended to defend.

He thought the matter was closed; but, having driven into town one day with Sir W. Mayne, he called at his lodgings and found there a letter from the Bishop of Chester telling him that his name

¹ Afterwards Archbishop of York.

was included in the list of those who were to receive honorary degrees at Oxford the next day, and begging him to call on him that evening. He added that this degree would be attended with no expense. "I had given up all thoughts of the matter," Beattie writes, "but did not think it right not to comply with the present invitation." Having written a few lines to Mrs. Beattie to acquaint her with what had occurred, he posted to Oxford, and arrived in time that evening to see the Bishop, by whom he was most kindly received, though, as he had warned him, his house being full of guests he had no bed to offer him. Accommodation for the night was indeed not easily to be had, so great was the influx of visitors anxious to be present at the installation of the Prime Minister. Mr. Williamson, however, found him a bed at St. Mary's Hall.

Next morning, he breakfasted with the Bishop, who provided him with bands and a Doctor of Laws gown, and instructed him in the necessary forms. At the Divinity Hall, to which they drove, the Bishop, having to attend Convocation, left Beattie, after committing him to the charge of a friend. Here were assembled several of Beattie's friends, among them Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Hawkins Brown, who were to receive degrees along with him; and he was introduced to many other gentlemen, so the time passed pleasantly until, about noon, they were called into the Theatre. Preceded by the beadles and Dr. Vansittart, Professor of Civic Law, the fifteen gentlemen who were to receive degrees, walked, in the order in which they were to be presented to the Chancellor, into the theatre, which was densely crowded. When it came to Beattie's turn, after the usual formula of presentation, Dr. Vansittart, "to my surprise went on with a long and elegant Latin oration in my praise, nearly to this purpose: 'Whose writings and character are too well known to stand in need of any encomium from me. He has had the singular fortune to join together in the happiest union the poetical and philosophical character; he is justly considered as one of the most elegant poets of his time, and his fame both as a philosopher and poet will be as permanent as that truth which he has so nobly defended.' This is but an abridgment, which was much more elegant in its composition, as well as more extravagant in its compliments."

Mr. Williamson, who was present when Dr. Vansittart spoke, wrote to Sir W. Forbes that this speech was much taken notice of in Oxford at the time, as it must have been entirely unpremeditated, inasmuch as Dr. Vansittart had not heard that Dr. Beattie was one of the graduates until about twenty minutes before it was spoken, when, surrounded by people, he had no leisure to compose. The long and loud applause, from all parts of the theatre, with which this speech and the conferment of the degree by Lord

North were greeted, satisfied Beattie that he had "many more friends there than he had any reason to expect, and that the honour was conferred on him with the heartiest good will of all parties"; indeed, so much so was this the case that he was afterwards assured by the Bishop of Chester that all the heads of houses in Oxford, and even the Vice-Chancellor himself, were now satisfied that, if the diploma degree had been asked for him, the Convocation would have granted it without the least opposition. As, however, the honorary degree conferred the same rank as the other, Beattie thought it of little consequence to him that he had not the rights and privileges which a diploma degree carried with it, as, living in Scotland, he would have had few opportunities of profiting by them.

The ceremonies of the day were concluded with a "most admirable" performance of Handel's Coronation Anthem by a great band of musicians led by Giardini. When the large assemblage broke up, Beattie was surrounded by old friends, and by others wishing to be introduced to him, all anxious to congratulate him on his new honour and to speak to him of his writings. Among his friends, none offered their congratulations "with greater affection and politeness" than Lord Dartmouth. He declined all invitations, as he was anxious to get back to London, but he could not resist the temptation of attending a very fine concert which was to be given in the theatre that afternoon. He describes it as the most magnificent musical entertainment at which he had ever been present. There was an audience of about three thousand five hundred persons, and the band, led by Giardini, was declared by him to be the finest he had ever heard. The singers were Mrs. Sheridan and her sister Miss Linley (supposed to be the best singers now in England); and the solo performers, Eikner on the bassoon, Crossdill on the violoncello, Vischer on the hautboy, and Giardini on the violin. Of the last-named, Beattie says: "Giardini exceeded all my expectations, the ease of his performance, the amazing rapidity and propriety of his execution, the fulness, variety, and mellowness of his tones, are such as those only who hear and see him can form any idea of."

Though it was late in the evening before the concert was over, Beattie intended to leave for London that night, but found that no chaise was to be had, and, on further inquiry next day, was told that "all post chaises and horses were entirely taken up for several days." So "vast a multitude" of people had assembled for the installation. He, therefore, resolved to set out on foot in the cool of the evening with Mr. Williamson, who insisted on accompanying him. This left him leisure during the day to call on some of the professors and others who had wished to see him. The Bishop of Chester received him with great kindness, offered his interest to provide

for him should he resolve to enter the Church, and begged Beattie, if still in England when he (the Bishop) returned from visiting his dioceses, to pay him a visit at his house near Kew. Before parting, the Bishop took Beattie to see the pictures in Christ's Church library, and showed him letters he had lately received from his young pupils, the Prince of Wales and his brother Prince Frederick. The handwriting of both letters Beattie describes as "extremely and surprisingly elegant, the style well enough, and the spelling and punctuation exact." The Bishop assured him they were written and composed without any assistance. From Prince Frederick's letter, Beattie extracts the following account of a walk he had lately had with his father in Kew Gardens. "The King gave us many instructions in regard to the duties of princes: told us that all men were born to labour and to do good; and that princes not being obliged to labour with their hands, were to labour with their heads, for the good of the people. For my part I am determined to do so, and to imitate my father in everything to the utmost of my power."

So much cordial kindness was shown to Beattie on this day of leave-taking, that he promised, if possible, to return and pay a longer visit to Oxford before leaving England. He dined that day with Sir David Carnegie, who hoped he would visit him at Kinnaird on his return to Scotland; and at six in the evening started in a chaise and four, which his kind friends Mr. and Mrs. John Pitt,¹ when they heard of his intention of setting out on foot, insisted on his using for the first stage. By choosing the least frequented road to London, he found a chaise which took him another stage that night, and next day he rejoined Mrs. Beattie at Arno's Grove.

His cordial reception in Oxford had given great satisfaction to his friends. Sir Joshua Reynolds, on his return to town, gave out that no one had been taken so much notice of at Oxford as Beattie, and that it was no easy matter to find him at leisure to be spoken with. Lord Dartmouth wrote to him: "It gave me great pleasure to see the proper attention that was paid by the University of Oxford to the cause of truth, in the person of one of its most distinguished advocates. That University has done herself more honour than she had power to confer on you." And Lord Lyttleton, in most affectionate terms, congratulated him not only on the honour he had received at Oxford, but also on his reception by the King, and on the pension he took for granted was to be given him. This, probably, was the last intercourse that Beattie had with Lord Lyttleton, as he heard of his death on the same day of the following month as he received this letter.

¹ He a gentleman of fortune, belonging to Dorsetshire.

From his return to London on the 12th of July till the 10th of August, Dr. and Mrs. Beattie were at Arno's Grove; Sir William and Lady Mayne insisting on their remaining with them until the affair of the pension should be settled. The time could not have been spent more pleasantly, nor in more congenial society. Judged by their letters, Beattie's host and hostess were cultured, intellectual people, with tastes similar to his own, and at their table he made many interesting acquaintances; while the days were varied by excursions to objects of interest in the neighbourhood. Lady Mayne had no children of her own, but she brought up a young lady whose parents were in India. Mary Graham was at this time quite a child, and it is interesting to trace her history in Lady Mayne's letters to Dr. Beattie, until, when age and infirmity brought the correspondence to a close, we leave her a happy wife and mother.

In the beginning of August, he heard that Dr. Johnson was just setting out for Scotland. It seems it had been intended that Beattie was to travel north with him, as he wrote at once to apologize for its not being in his power to accompany him. Johnson replied on August 5th:—

"I shall set out to-morrow with less cheerfulness, because I shall not find you and Mrs. Beattie at the College, but as my journey is regulated by the vacation of the Courts, I cannot delay it. It is very little for the honour of the age, that you should meet with any delay or obstruction in the improvement of your fortune. If I had power or influence, you should soon be raised above your difficulties. Whatever good I wish you, I wish likewise to your lady, for I hope you both consider me as your most affectionate and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Among the visitors at Arno's Grove early in August was the Countess Cowper, a daughter of Lord Carteret, and nearly connected with many of the greatest families in England. Beattie says of her: "She is a woman of very quick and lively parts, extremely entertaining and agreeable in her discourse, and she knows more of the great people of the last age than anybody almost I have met with."

During a subsequent short stay in town, the friendship between the Beatties and Sir Joshua Reynolds and his sister, already great, became still more intimate. Even before they went to Arno's Grove, Mrs. Beattie had often spent most of the day with Miss Reynolds, when Beattie was otherwise engaged; now, the two families were seldom apart. It was at this time that Sir Joshua first broached the idea of introducing a portrait of Beattie into an allegorical picture. The day after he came to town, Beattie

writes: "Sir Joshua proposes to paint an allegorical picture, representing me and one or two more lashing Infidelity, etc., down to the bottomless pit, and desires me to think of the contrivance of it."

But before we come to the account of the carrying out of Sir Joshua's design, there are several interesting items in the journal to be noted.

"*August 12th.*—Dined with Miss Reynolds. She says that Dr. Johnson, before he set out for Scotland, had expressed great concern that I could not be of the party, and had spoken of me in terms of very great affection. He expressed great dissatisfaction at the thoughts of my coming into the Church, saying that my writings on behalf of religion would not produce half their effect if people should ever imagine that I had written with a view to Church preferment; and that though any man of sense might with a clear conscience make the transition from Presbytery to Episcopacy, yet if I were to do it, my enemies might from thence take occasion to charge me with levity and want of principle."

The next day, the whole party, Sir J. and Miss Reynolds and the Beatties, accompanied by Mr. Baretti, drove to Streatham and dined with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. "There was much company—Sir Thomas Mills, Dr. Goldsmith, etc. In the evening, there was a great deal of lightning, which amused us very much on our way to town. I observed a ball of fire, apparently as large as the full moon, which continued for the space of more than a minute above the horizon." On the 14th of August, Beattie saw Mr. Robinson, Secretary of the Treasury, who assured him that it was quite determined to settle a pension upon him, to be paid out of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, so that land tax would not be deducted from it as from English pensions. Mr. Robinson regretted the delay that had taken place in announcing this, but undertook to do all in his power to have the affair settled in the course of the following week.

Dr. and Mrs. Beattie dined that day with Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds. "Baretti was there, whose picture Sir Joshua has just finished. It is a very fine performance and took up just eight hours in painting. Sir Joshua determined soon to begin the allegorical painting, if he can possibly find time."

Beattie had intended to return to Arno's Grove the next day after seeing Mr. Robinson, but Sir Joshua "insisted on it that we should stay till to-morrow and partake of a haunch of venison with him to-day at his house on Richmond Hill." This they did, and, after relating the events of the day, Beattie writes: "This day I have had a great deal of conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds on critical and philosophical subjects. I find him to be a man not only of excellent taste in painting and poetry, but of an enlarged understanding and

truly philosophical mind. His notions of painting are not at all the same with those that are entertained by the generality of painters and critics. Artificial and contrasted attitudes in groups he makes no account of; it is the truth and simplicity of Nature which he is ambitious to imitate, and these, it must be allowed that he possesses the art of blending with the most exquisite grace and most animated expression. He speaks with contempt of those who suppose grace to consist in erect posture, turned-out toes, or the frippery of modern dress. Indeed, whatever account we make of the colouring of the great artist, which some people object to, it is impossible to deny him the praise of being the greatest designer of this or perhaps of any age. In his pictures there is a grace, a variety, an expression, a simplicity, which I have never seen in the works of any other painter. His portraits are distinguished from all others by this, that they exhibit an exact imitation not only of the features, but also of the character of the person represented. His picture of Garrick between tragedy and comedy (for which he received three hundred pounds from Lord Halifax), he tells me that he finished in a week."

"*August 16th.*—Breakfasted with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who this day began the allegorical picture. I sat to him five hours, in which time he finished my head and sketched out the rest of my figure; the likeness is most striking, and the execution masterly. I stand at one end of the picture, dressed in a Doctor of Laws band and gown, and the 'Essay on Truth' under my arm. The figure is as large as life. The plan is not fixed for the rest of the picture, but Sir Joshua means to finish it with all expedition and proposes a print to be done from it. Though I sat for five hours, I was not in the least fatigued, for, by placing a large looking glass opposite to my face, Sir Joshua put it in my power to see every stroke of his pencil, and I was greatly entertained to see the progress of the work in the easy and masterly manner of the artist, which differs as much from that of all the other painters I have seen at work as the execution of Giardini differs from that of a common fiddler." This was the only sitting Sir Joshua required from Beattie.

That afternoon, the Beatties returned to Arno's Grove for a few days before bidding a final farewell to their kind host and hostess there. On the 20th of August, they came into town, and, on the 21st, the official intimation that the pension had been bestowed upon him came enclosed in a kind letter from Mr. Robinson.

Meantime, Beattie had had a letter from Dr. Majendie, begging that, for a particular reason, he and Mrs. Beattie would dine with him on the 24th, and would be at Kew before twelve o'clock. On his coming into town, Dr. Majendie called and explained that the particular reason was that the King had been asking him about

Beattie, and, hearing that he had promised to spend a day with Dr. Majendie before he left England, had desired that he should be informed when the visit was to take place. Dr. Majendie inferred from this that his Majesty intended to give Beattie a private audience.

On going to Kew on the day appointed, Beattie found that the King had intimated that he would see him a little after twelve. Accompanied by Dr. Majendie, Beattie was in waiting at the appointed time, and after some delay—"We were called into a large room, furnished as a library, where the King was walking about and the Queen sitting in a chair. We were received in the most gracious manner possible by both their Majesties. I had the honour of a conversation with them, nobody else being present but Dr. Majendie, for upwards of an hour, on a great variety of topics, in which both the King and Queen joined with a degree of cheerfulness, affability and ease, that was to me surprising, and soon dissipated the concern which I felt at the beginning of the conference. They both complimented me in the highest terms on my *Essay*, which they said was a book they always kept by them, and the King said he had one copy of it at Kew and another in town, and immediately went and took it down from a shelf. I found it was the second edition. 'I never stole a book but one,' said his Majesty, 'and that was yours. I stole it from the Queen to give it to Lord Hertford to read.' He had heard that the sale of Hume's *Essay* had failed since my book was published, and I told him what Mr. Strachan had told me in regard to that matter. He had even heard of my being in Edinburgh last summer, and how Mr. Hume was offended on the score of my books. He asked many questions about the second part of the *Essay*, and when it would be ready for the press. I gave him in a short speech an account of the plan of it, and said my health was so precarious I could not tell when it might be ready, as I had many books to consult before I could finish it; but that if my health were good I thought I might bring it to a conclusion in two or three years. He asked how long I had been in composing my *Essay*, praised the caution with which it is written, and said he did not wonder that it had employed me five or six years. He asked me about my poems. I said there was only one poem of my own on which I set any value (meaning the '*Minstrel*'), and that it was first published about the same time as the *Essay*. My other poems, I said, were incorrect, being but juvenile pieces and of little consequence even in my own opinion. We had much conversation on moral subjects, from which both their Majesties let it appear that they were warm friends to Christianity, and so little inclined to Infidelity that they could hardly believe that any thinking man could be an infidel. I said that I did not see how a man could really be an atheist unless he could bring himself to believe that he

made himself; a thought which pleased the King exceedingly, and he repeated it several times to the Queen. I was asked many questions about the Scotch Universities, the revenues of the Scotch clergy, their mode of praying and preaching, the Physical College of Edinburgh, Dr. Gregory (of whom I gave a particular character) and Dr. Cullen, the length of our vacation at Aberdeen and the closeness of our attendance during the winter, the number of students that attended my lectures, my mode of lecturing—whether from notes or completely written lectures, about Mr. Hume, and Dr. Robertson, and Lord Kinnoull, and the Archbishop of York, etc., etc. He asked me what I thought of my new acquaintance, Lord Dartmouth. I said there was something in his air and manner which I thought not only agreeable but enchanting, and that he seemed to me to be one of the best of men, a sentiment in which both their Majesties heartily joined. ‘They say Lord Dartmouth is an enthusiast,’ said the King, ‘but surely he says nothing on the subject of religion but what every Christian may and ought to say.’ When I told him the Scotch clergy sometimes prayed a quarter or even half an hour at a time, he asked whether that did not lead them into repetition. I said it often did. ‘That,’ says he, ‘I don’t like in prayers; and excellent as our Liturgy is, I think it somewhat faulty in that respect.’ ‘Your Majesty knows,’ said I, ‘that three services are joined in one in the ordinary Church service, which is one cause of those repetitions.’ ‘True,’ he replied, ‘and that circumstance also makes the service too long.’ From this he took occasion to speak of the Church Liturgy, on which he very justly bestowed the very highest commendation. ‘Observe,’ says his Majesty, ‘how flat those occasional prayers are that are now composed, in comparison with the old ones.’ When I mentioned the smallness of the Church livings in Scotland, he said he wondered how men of liberal education would choose to become clergymen there, and asked whether in the remote parts of the country the clergy were not in general very ignorant. I answered ‘No, for that education was very cheap in Scotland, and that the clergy in general were men of good sense and competent learning.’

“We discussed a good many other topics, for the conversation lasted for upwards of an hour without any intermission. The Queen bore a large share in it. Both the King and she showed a great deal of good sense, acuteness, and knowledge, as well as of good nature and affability. The Queen sat all the while, and the King stood, sometimes walking about a little. Her Majesty speaks the English language with surprising elegance, and little or nothing of a foreign accent. There is something wonderfully pleasing in her manner; so that if she were only of the rank of a private gentlewoman, one could not help taking notice of her as one of the most agreeable women in the world. Her face is much handsomer than any of her pictures;

and in the look of her eyes, and in her smile, there is something peculiarly engaging."

The interview was brought to a close as the King's dinner hour (three o'clock) approached, by his Majesty taking out his watch, which Drs. Majendie and Beattie took as a signal to withdraw. But, before doing so, Beattie took the opportunity to thank the King for the honour he had conferred on him by granting him the pension. His Majesty replied: "I think I could do no less for a man who has done so much service to the nation in general, and to the cause of Christianity. I shall always be glad of an opportunity to show the good opinion I have of you." Beattie adds: "One of the last things the King said to me was singularly polite and condescending. 'Remember,' said he, 'that what has been determined in your favour, is for what you have done, not in consideration of anything you may hereafter do'—meaning that no restraint was intended upon my future sentiments or conduct."

On retiring from the Royal presence, Beattie was anxious to learn from Dr. Majendie whether he had conducted himself aright in an interview so novel to his experience. Majendie told him he might be perfectly convinced he had done so, as, "if there had been anything in your manner or conversation which was not perfectly agreeable, your conference would have been at an end in eight or ten minutes at most." "The Doctor afterwards told me that it was a most uncommon thing for a private man and a commoner to be honoured with so long an audience. I asked him about the propriety of sending a copy of the next edition of my book, which is much fuller and more correct than the second, as a present to the King, and another to the Queen. He said it would be quite proper, and that I might send them to him, and that he would present them."

In all that had been done to promote Beattie's interests Mrs. Montagu had taken a prominent part. Indeed, shortly after he came to London, "in very explicit though delicate terms" she had informed him that, if the Government did nothing for him, she would herself settle an annuity on him for life.

As soon as the pension had been officially announced, Beattie prepared to set out for Sandleford, as Mrs. Montagu urgently requested him to do. But, before leaving London, he had farewell visits to pay. One of those visits was to Lord Mansfield, to thank him for all he had done for him. Lord Mansfield received him with his usual kindness, and congratulated him on the "happy conclusion" of his affairs. He told Beattie that he had learned from the King, with whom he had had frequent conversation about Beattie, that it had been his intention, without having been asked, to present Beattie to some sinecure office, and that he had employed the Lord Advocate to discover Beattie's wishes through Lord Hailes the previous summer.

On the last two days of their stay in London, Dr. and Mrs. Beattie dined with Sir Joshua Reynolds. In his journal, Beattie writes : "Sir Joshua is very happy at my success, wishes the pension had been greater, but says he lately heard that it had been determined some time ago that two hundred pounds should henceforth be the maximum of pensions to literary men. For my own part I have every reason to be satisfied, this appointment being equal to all my wishes, and far superior to both my hopes and my deservings."

He called also on Dilly, for whom he had just finished revising the "Essay on Truth" for a fifth edition, and desired that three copies of this edition should be printed on the finest paper ; "two of these I intend for the King and Queen." The third edition of the "Minstrel" being almost sold off, Dilly asked Beattie to correct it for a fourth, which he intended to print immediately.

It was not until the 28th of August that the Beatties arrived at Sandleford. They found Mrs. Montagu in a very indifferent state of health, and her thoughts full of her friend Lord Lyttleton, who had just died. This nobleman, whose literary talent gained him, in his youth, the affection of Pope, is now best known as the writer of the "Treatise on the Conversion and the Apostleship of St. Paul," which was the result of the studies by which he himself, in middle life, was converted from scepticism to sincere and zealous belief in Christianity. Of his death Mrs. Montagu gave Beattie the following particulars :—

"His lordship died as he had lived, an illustrious example of Christian virtue. His last breath was spent in comforting and instructing his friends. 'Be good and virtuous,' said he to Lord Valensia, 'for to this you must come.' His piety and cheerful resignation did not forsake him even in the moment of dissolution, but fixed a smile on his lifeless countenance."

The visit to Sandleford was but of ten days' duration. Though Mrs. Montagu was anxious to retain her guests, she saw it would be better that their journey northwards should not be longer delayed, both on account of the season of the year and of their health. The strain of waiting and the unusual life of constant company had told on them both, more particularly on Mrs. Beattie. Her threatening state of health made Beattie determined to go straight to Edinburgh. He had, therefore, many apologies to write to friends who had wished to have a visit from them before they left for Scotland, or on their way there. Among these were Dr. Porteus and Mr. Peckard, the Dowager Duchess of Portland, Mr. Langton, and his Oxford friends.

Before leaving Sandleford, Mrs. Montagu and he arranged the form of the subscription paper for the edition of his "Essay on Truth" and other Essays, which she, Sir William and Lady Mayne,

and others, were to circulate among his friends. Beattie stipulated, and Mrs. Montagu agreed, that this subscription was not to be advertized in the newspapers, nor put into the hands of the book-sellers, but conducted entirely by his particular friends.

One day, while at Sandleford, Beattie was looking over some books that Mrs. Montagu had put into his hands, and found by accident a fragment of a newspaper, dated in July of that year, containing some "very abusive and false reflections on me; but the author had missed his aim, for I never before either saw or heard of such a thing."

The Beatties left Sandleford on the 8th of September and posted to Edinburgh, which they did not reach till the 17th, as they were detained at Greenlaw for three nights by Mrs. Beattie's illness. They remained ten days in Edinburgh, during which time Mrs. Beattie was under Dr. Cullen's care, while Beattie transacted business relating to his pension. He got the Royal Warrant for it passed through the several offices, and received upon it letters under the Privy Seal of Scotland. The expense of this, along with the dues already paid to the Treasury, came to £20 11s. 8d., and he heard that hereafter a tax of eighteenpence on the pound, and something to be given to the person who paid the pension, would always be deducted, bringing its amount down to £183 10s. instead of £200 a year; he was also warned that three weeks might often elapse after a quarterly payment was due before he would get the money.

As soon as Dr. Cullen permitted Mrs. Beattie to travel, they set out for home. Her health prevented their paying a promised visit to Lord Kinnoull on their way north, and obliged them to travel very slowly, but they reached Aberdeen safely on the 30th of September, "after an absence of five months and one week, and had the satisfaction to find all our friends in good health."

The journal concludes with an account of the expense of this journey and long stay in London; by which it appears that, though Beattie had declined all gifts of money, he had been obliged to borrow. His kind friend Sir William Forbes supplied him with what he required, and it was soon in Beattie's power to repay him.

That Beattie was fully satisfied with the result of his visit to London, we learn from a passage in one of his letters to Mrs. Montagu. In it, he says:—

"It is very good in you, Madam, to flatter me with the hopes that still better things may be in reserve for me. But I assure you I think myself rewarded above my deservings, and shall most willingly sit down contented—not to eat, drink, or be idle, but to make such a use of the goodness of Providence and his Majesty's bounty as the public has a right to require of me. What I have now got, added

to the emoluments of my present office, will enable me to live independently and comfortably in Scotland, and to cultivate those connections and friendships in England which do me so much honour."

These were no mere words; for, from henceforth, Beattie *did* "sit down contented" and refused all further offers of advancement.¹

¹ The income arising from his professorship varied much, according to the number of students in his class from whom he accepted fees: there were always many whom he admitted free. One year, the income was £157 10s. 3d.; another, £120 16s. 8d. The sum he received from his pension was £183 10s.

1773—1774.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONGRATULATIONS AND DEPRECIATION.

Estimation in which Beattie and the "Essay on Truth" were held by his Contemporaries—Letters from Dr. Porteus, the Archbishop of York, and Mr. Burn in his favour—Accusations against him by Mr. Hume's friends—Is urged to accept a professorship in Edinburgh—Letters on this subject from Sir William Forbes and Lord Hailes—Beattie's replies.

SIR WILLIAM FORBES, in his "Life of Beattie," remarks: "Although Dr. Beattie's acquaintances in early life had been of the humblest sort, and even after his removal from the parochial school of Fordoun to Aberdeen had been of a rank very inferior to that into which he came afterwards to be introduced, yet he showed no awkwardness of behaviour in the most exalted and polished circles. And it must be recorded to his praise that, notwithstanding he had been caressed by the great and by the learned in England in a degree beyond most authors of his day, he returned to his native country unspoiled by prosperity, and as humble and as unassuming in his manner as he had left it."

Sir William Forbes wrote from personal knowledge, but to those making acquaintance with Beattie merely by reading his letters and those of his correspondents of all ranks, the conviction must come that so it must have been. Such a man could never have condescended to the littleness of assuming airs of consequence on his return home because for a few months he had been "caressed by the great and learned in England."

Though chronicling all the flattering attentions paid him during his stay in London, there is not then, nor at any future time, a trace of undue elation or over-estimation of himself; nor on the other hand of any undue self-depreciation. As an author, no one was a keener critic of his own works, and, as his biographer, Mr. Chalmers, writes: "In every point of life Mr. Beattie appears to have formed an exact estimate of his own talents." So, though overflowing with gratitude to all his friends—to king and peer and commoner—he never forgot what he owed to himself; and the invariably respectful, and in many cases affectionate terms in which his correspondents of all ranks write to him, show that, in applying for this pension at the instigation of his friends, his conduct was such as to raise, not to lower, him in the estimation of those he addressed on the subject.

Beattie, simple yet dignified in character and bearing, felt, in whatever circumstances he was placed, what his fellow countryman afterwards sang—

“A man’s a man for a’ that.”

Did this sentiment come to these two men from their common origin, the “Howe of the Mearns,” so famed for its “men”?¹ The early homes of Burns’s father and of Beattie are not far apart.

Now, when any fame still accorded to Beattie is mainly on account of his being the author of the “Minstrel,” it seems to be supposed that such was the case in his own day—that his pension and his degree at Oxford were given on account of his poetry; and that, in painting his allegorical picture, in which he depicts Beattie triumphing by his book on “Truth” over Folly, Infidelity and Scepticism, Sir Joshua Reynolds was unfortunately carried away by a passing enthusiasm for the lion of a London season.

This correspondence shows how entirely erroneous this view is, and how very differently Beattie’s works were regarded by his contemporaries. They judged his “Essay on Truth” by the effect it had produced upon themselves and others, and by the heart it had put into the party of religion at a time when it was considered the mark of superiority in talent and enlightenment to be an unbeliever. The value of the Essay had been acknowledged and its popularity shown by its rapid sale before a line of the “Minstrel” had been published. The King, from the time he read it, determined to show favour to its author by giving him a place or a pension; and the work had been made a class book in several of the colleges of both the English universities before Oxford granted a degree.

That the author of a philosophical treatise should also be the author of the “Minstrel” no doubt heightened the interest in Beattie, which, so far from being lessened by a personal acquaintance with him, deepened into respect and love through the charm of his companionship. “As a companion,” writes Chalmers, “few men exhibited more captivation.” A letter that Beattie received from Dr. Porteus shortly after his return home, gives a good idea of what his contemporaries of the religious party thought of the grant of the pension and the reason of its bestowal:—

“HUNTON, NEAR MAIDSTONE, KENT,

“November, 1778.

“By this time, I presume, you are once more quietly settled in your philosophical retreat at Aberdeen, to which you carry the praises of all good men here, and distinguishing marks of your Sovereign’s favour. It gave me singular pleasure to hear of this

¹ The ability of the men of the Mearns has, in fact, become proverbial. “I can dae fat I dou. The men o’ the Mearns can dae nae mae.”—“On Stra’fina Tap,” by Wm. Cramond, M.A., LL.D., F.S.A. Scot.

event, so honourable to you and to your Royal patron, and so encouraging to those that set themselves to stem the torrent of infidelity which is overrunning this island, more especially the northern part of it. You are happily planted there by Providence to check the progress of it, and I hope you will continue your efforts with the same spirit and success that you began them. There never was, I am sure, any donation more judiciously bestowed than that which you have just received. It will meet with universal approbation, and be attended with effects no less beneficial to the cause of religion in general than to yourself in particular. In this last respect its operation is not quite so extensive and effectual as I wished it to be. I was in hopes that it would have entirely released you from the labours of your present station and left you at full liberty to employ your time and your talents in the way that was most pleasing to yourself and most useful to the world."

The Archbishop of York wrote in the same strain in September from Brodsworth. He expresses "the sensible satisfaction which I have in your being rewarded, though not to the full of your merit, yet by a personal mark of the King's favour and well-grounded opinion. I look upon this not only as a distinguished reward of your merit in the cause of virtue and truth, but as a beacon to those who are tossed about among the waves of infidelity. I believe, as I hope, that it will in a general light do good; and *that* is the great purpose of the King, which he declared to *me* when he first came to the Crown, and you are the happy instrument that carries this purpose forward by your constant labours in defence of truth.

"I wrote to Lord Kinnoull as soon as I got your letter, and it will give him much pleasure. I have since seen the Lord President Dundas here, who is much pleased, both upon your account and the service it may do to many people, particularly in Scotland, who run astray.

"P.S.—Don't drop your correspondence, which will be always agreeable to me."

Another letter of congratulation shows that it was not alone in England, nor among the great, that the recognition of Beattie's service to truth was hailed with pleasure. The writer, a Mr. Burn, dating from Largo, Fifeshire, says that, so much was he delighted with the work on the "Immutability of Truth" that "from love to mankind I thought it my duty four years ago to recommend it to the reading of all I could either see or write to. Imagine, then, my joy in seeing its fame increased—attest your honours at Oxford, your reception from the King, your rewards from Government."

But, if the gift of a pension to Beattie gave satisfaction to his friends and the party of religion, it gave equal dissatisfaction to

the friends of Mr. Hume, and to the envious. Few men on whom public honours have been bestowed escape being envied by those who consider themselves, and who may be, equally worthy of them, and have been overlooked. When Beattie was conscious of such a feeling existing towards himself, regret that it should be so seems to have been the only sentiment it aroused in him. It was otherwise in regard to the stories to his disadvantage that some of Mr. Hume's friends industriously circulated. Before publishing his *Essay*, he had said he expected and was prepared to meet the obloquy his work was sure to bring upon him; but, when it came, though he never quailed before it, his sensitive nature evidently suffered from it more than he had anticipated.

It is needless now to recall the particulars of the accusations brought against Beattie and his friends. They were chiefly made to prove that enmity against Hume himself, and not against his writings, had prompted Beattie to write the "*Essay on Truth*," and his friends, particularly Lord Mansfield,¹ to puff his work and himself into notice. The groundlessness of these charges may be inferred from the story which was told to Lady Mayne shortly after Beattie left London, and which she immediately related to him; at the same time begging him to furnish her with full particulars to enable her to answer it at once, as otherwise it might impose upon many well-meaning people. She writes: "The matter is this: Some of the friends of Hume accuse you of ingratitude and rancour towards him; for, say they, he was very instrumental in procuring for him the professorship he now enjoys at Aberdeen, and kept up a friendly correspondence with him, till at length Dr. Beattie sent him a poem of his, which was never printed; but Hume not liking it, and being frank in his nature, sent him word it was insipid as milk and water; upon which Dr. Beattie, bent on revenge, immediately set about his '*Essay on Truth*,' which is full of virulence and misquotation. I thanked the persons who communicated this intelligence to me, telling them I loved accusations when they were brought to particular facts, because they were then easily controverted,

¹ "My adversaries have contrived a very curious theory to account for my success in England, which they are careful to circulate, after having enforced it with the most solemn assurances that to their certain knowledge it is true; and some of them pretend to be very profoundly skilled in the Court politics. They will not allow me any merit either as a writer or as a man; they say that when the Douglas cause was finally decided, Mr. Hume, who was very justly offended at the decision, had expressed himself in a letter to a friend with some bitterness in regard to Lord Mansfield's character, which his lordship hearing, and being according to their account the most vindictive as well as the most unrighteous man in the world, was determined to be avenged on the very first opportunity, and finding that he could not do this so effectually in any other way as by patronising the man who was Mr. Hume's avowed antagonist, he immediately set about recommending me and my book to the English nation, and at last, to complete his own triumph, prevailed with the King to grant me this pension."—Extract from letter to Mrs. Montagu, October 4th, 1773.

and served to mark the characters of both the accusers and accused; and that therefore I would take care to acquaint you of it immediately."

Beattie's reply shows that he was not a little indignant at the falsehoods contained in this accusation. He answers each charge in full, concluding one paragraph by saying, "In a word, I have not, I never in my life had, any sort of correspondence, acquaintance or connection with Mr. Hume."

In writing to Mr. Arbuthnot¹ a few days after the date of his letter to Lady Mayne, he quotes from her letter, without giving her name, the charge made against him, and makes the following remarks, probably with a view to their being reported to Mr. Hume: "You may believe that an accusation of this sort, in which, you know, I can prove there is not one single word of truth, cannot give me much pain. But I should be glad that Mr. Hume, for his own sake, would disavow it; and indeed I cannot suppose that he is so destitute of candour as to give countenance to a report which he himself knows to be altogether false."

In the autumn of 1773, a vacancy occurred in Edinburgh University by the death of Dr. James Russell, Professor of Natural Philosophy. Several candidates for the appointment had come forward, when a member of the Town Council, in whose gift the chair lay, called on Sir William Forbes to ask him to ascertain whether Dr. Beattie would be willing to accept the appointment, as he and several members of the Town Council were keeping themselves disengaged until they knew his mind. They were aware that Natural Philosophy was not his subject, but they thought Mr. Adam Ferguson, Professor of Moral Philosophy, might be willing to exchange chairs with him, as he had formerly lectured on Natural Philosophy. If Dr. Beattie would agree to become a candidate, his friends in the Council had no doubt that his high reputation would secure the chair.

Sir William at once communicated to Beattie an account of this interview, and said the friendship expressed towards him was the more gratifying as it came from one who did not know him personally.

The following day brought another letter from Sir William.

"I wrote you a long letter last night. I am singularly anxious to know what you think of the matter I then communicated to you. I find it whispered that your becoming a candidate at this time would be extremely agreeable, if you find it convenient for yourself, it is even spoke of that without any regard to Mr. Ferguson you should be a candidate for the chair of *Natural Philosophy*. How far you should wish to make this change in the nature of your studies seems to me a doubtful point. It is extremely

¹ Letter in full in Sir William Forbes's Life.

pleasant, however, to be an object of general good will in such a manner as this."

Beattie, after thanking Sir William for the kindness of his letters, replied to the proposal contained in them, that a few years ago he would have thought himself a great gainer by exchanging his present position for a professorship in Edinburgh, as his income would have been doubled and his labour much lessened. Still, these would have been secondary considerations; the great inducement would have been that his dearest and best friends were resident in Edinburgh. But though most of those friends were spared to him, "yet, my dear friend, there are reasons, and those of no small moment, which determine me to give up all thought of appearing as a candidate on the present occasion; and which would determine me to this, even though I were absolutely certain of being elected. Nay, though my fortune were as narrow as it lately was, I should still incline rather to remain quiet where I am, than, by becoming a member of the University of Edinburgh, to place myself within the reach of those (few as they are) who have been pleased to let the world know that they do not wish me well—not that I have any reason to mind their enmity or to dread its consequences. They must not flatter themselves that they have ever been able as yet to give me a moment's uneasiness, notwithstanding the zeal with which they have spoken against me. My cause is so good, that he who espouses it can never have occasion to be afraid of any man. But I am so great a lover of peace, and so willing to think well of all my neighbours, that I do not wish to be connected with one person who dislikes me. Had I ever injured the persons whom I allude to, I might have hoped to regain their favour by submission (which in that case would have become me) and by a change of conduct. But as they are singular enough to hate me for what, I trust, with God's help I shall never cease to do (I mean for endeavouring to vindicate the cause of truth with that zeal which so important a cause requires), I could never hope that they would live with me on those agreeable terms, on which I desire to live with all good men, and on which, by the blessing of Providence, I have the honour and happiness to live with so great a number of the most respectable persons of this age."

This letter (dated October 22nd, 1773) was supposed both by Beattie and by Sir William Forbes to have put an end to any further proposal on the subject; but the following spring, on its being reported that Professor A. Ferguson was about to resign, pressure was again brought to bear on Beattie to appear as a candidate. The first letter he got on the subject, was from a Mr. Young, dated February 12th, 1774.

"The principal design of this letter is to inform you that Dr. A. Ferguson is appointed to travel as tutor to the Earl of Chesterfield

with a salary of £400 per annum for life, in consequence of which the Moral Philosophy class of this college will become vacant. All your friends in Edinburgh would be very happy to see you fill that chair.

"They have not been idle, for last night letters were dispatched for London, to some of the principal people in the administration there, soliciting the utmost exertion of their interest on your behalf." He goes on to impress on Beattie the necessity of using his own influence to secure his appointment, and indicates who are the people who ought to be approached on the subject, ending by a hint on this point from Professor Robertson, the historian, which shows that he was not averse to the idea of having Beattie for a colleague.

Beattie's reply to Mr. Young must have been to the same effect as his answer to Sir William Forbes the previous autumn, and the purport of it must have got abroad, as Professor Stuart¹ wrote shortly afterwards reminding him of their common friend Dr. Gregory's desire that he should fill the chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh, where his usefulness would be more extensive than in Aberdeen, and begging that he would allow his friends to contradict the rumour that he would not accept the chair were it in his offer; adding, "one thing I shall venture to say, that the opposition of those who may be thought to entertain different sentiments from you needs not in the least deter you. You will be welcome to a great majority here."

Meantime, the applications to London from Edinburgh in Beattie's favour were answered by Lord Dartmouth writing to Sir Adolphus Oughton asking him to use all his influence to obtain the professorship for Beattie. Sir Adolphus Oughton wrote to Beattie assuring him he would do all in his power for him, although he feared he had not much influence with the Town Council. On a corner of this letter, Beattie has written, "Answered in course and told Sir Adolphus that the report of my being a candidate for Ferguson's place was a mistake, for that for private reasons I would not accept of it even if it were in my offer." But, as his broken arm² still made writing a difficulty, he wrote at the same time to Sir William Forbes begging him to show, both to Sir Adolphus Oughton and to Professor Stuart, the letter he had written to him in autumn, giving more fully the reasons for his unwillingness to go to Edinburgh. He expressed his obligations to the unknown friends who had made this application for him, and asked Sir W. Forbes, if he knows who they are, to thank them in his name—though he regretted his friends in England, who had lately done so much for him, had been again applied to on his behalf.

¹ Professor of Humanity in Edinburgh University.

² He had fallen and broken his arm in the spring of this year.

So the matter rested for some little time, but Sir William continued to hear so much regret expressed at Beattie's determination, not only by his friends, but also by many people of repute among the large body who had attached themselves to him without a personal acquaintance, that he resolved to consult their common friend Lord Hailes, whether another effort should not be made to induce Beattie to apply for the chair. He found Lord Hailes felt keenly on the subject and was much concerned at Beattie's refusal to become a candidate for an office where his sphere of influence would be so much enlarged. He begged Sir William to convey to Beattie his sentiments on the subject, and followed up his message in the course of the next day by two letters to Sir W. Forbes, containing additional arguments which he thought might induce Beattie to reconsider his determination. These letters Sir William enclosed in two of his own, in which he enforced the advice of Lord Hailes. "Indeed, indeed, my dear friend," he writes, "you must think of it seriously, and yield to what seems in some respect to be pointed out for you by Heaven, with a view to advance the best interests of religion and everything that is valuable to mankind. After this matter has become so much the object of the public attention among all ranks of men, I am really afraid a disappointment through your reluctance to leave Aberdeen, or rather your aversion to come to Edinburgh, may give room for unfavourable conjectures and constructions, which every friend you have would be sorry to hear. Adieu, my dear friend, may God Almighty direct you aright in this deliberation."

Sir W. Forbes had shown to Lord Hailes Beattie's letter of the former autumn, in which the reason upon which he had chiefly dwelt for declining all thought of accepting an Edinburgh professorship was his unwillingness to be associated with those who had shown themselves hostile to him on account of his writings; the other "reasons of no small moment" which he had alluded to, he had passed over without further comment. This had led Lord Hailes to imagine that it was simply fear of his opponents and love of his own ease that dictated his resolve, and that what he required was to be braced and encouraged by being reminded of the evil his refusal might occasion, and the good he was throwing away an opportunity of doing. Written under this impression, his letters would have been well adapted for his purpose, though even then they might have been couched in terms less likely to offend than Lord Hailes, in his haste and eagerness to convince, employed. Pointing out the wrong done to the magistrates of Edinburgh, who, he said, had always shown "a seal almost without example of supplying the vacant professorships with the persons best qualified" irrespective of party or private connexion, by an *obstinate* refusal of their offer on such grounds; and the responsibility which would be his were a bad appointment

made. The last sentence in his second letter shows why this matter interested Lord Hailes so deeply and made Beattie's refusal such a keen disappointment to him. "I am not sure that it is a very Christian sentiment, yet I must say that a rebuff at this time will be very discouraging, especially when we ourselves have the ball at our foot. If the friends of religion, and they who consider the value of religious education, are to have no aid where that might be expected, what is to come next? If Dr. Beattie shrinks, will not every man of ability shrink too?"

Other two quotations from the letters will serve to show why Beattie was nettled by them, and why, had Sir William taken time to think, he would have judged it better to have sent a summary of their contents, and not the letters themselves.

"If Dr. Beattie is affected with obloquy, I wish he were a judge for six months, and then he would find that unless a man can have patience to condemn the gainsayers, he will have little comfort in the plain path of duty." "The more I think of this affair the more I am persuaded that Dr. Beattie's terrors are panic. I impute them to bad health and a vegetable diet."¹

Beattie's reply to Sir W. Forbes, which is very lengthy, shows he was not a little hurt at Lord Hailes's well meant expostulations.

Of *obstinate* refusal he said he should not be accused until *all* his reasons should be known, and he had specified those only of a less private nature. There were others, but of such a sort as "I should think it petulance to obtrude on the public."

Of *fear*—he thought he had proved himself, by his writings, words, and actions, no timorous assertor of good principles. And of *obloquy* he had had a share as large as any private person he knew, and had borne it and could bear it with a degree of fortitude of which he need not be ashamed. "Every honest man, whether his station be public or private, will do his duty without minding obloquy. Convince me that it is my duty to remove from hence to Edinburgh, and you shall see me set out immediately, as regardless of the snarling of my enemies there, as of the curs who might snap at my heels by the way." One of the chief reasons, he says, which determine his present choice is that, by remaining in Aberdeen, he will have more leisure and quiet in which to prosecute his studies and to endeavour to confute error and illustrate truth by his writings, than he could possibly command in Edinburgh; and, though the field of usefulness might be larger in Edinburgh, that which he occupied in Aberdeen was by no means restricted. "My lectures are not confined to my own class. I do what no other professor here ever did, and what no professor in any other part of Great Britain can do. I admit, together with my own students in Moral Philosophy, all the Divinity students of two universities

¹ A diet, by the way, in which Beattie could never indulge.

who are willing to attend me; and I have often a very crowded auditory; and I receive fees from nobody but from such of my own private class as are able to pay them. Nobody ever asked me to do this, and nobody thanks me for it, except the young men themselves, and yet in all this there is so little merit, it being as easy for me to lecture to a hundred as to thirty, that I should not have thought it worth mentioning, except with a view to obviate an objection that seems to be implied in some things that have been thrown out at this time.

"So much for my duties to the public, to which, I would fain hope, it will be found that I am not quite insensible. But, according to my notions of morality, there are also duties which a man owes to his family, and to himself; nor is it, in my opinion, incumbent on any man to overlook the latter, merely because it is possible that by so doing he might discharge the former more effectually. . . . My health and my quiet may be of little consequence to the public, but they are of very considerable consequence to me, and to those who depend upon me; and I am certain that I shall have a much better chance of securing both by staying where I am than by removing to Edinburgh. I have more reasons than the world knows of to wish to pass the latter part of my days in quiet; and the more quiet and the more health I enjoy, the more I shall have it in my power to exert myself in the service of the public."

This last sentence, in which for the second time he hints at reasons for his love of quiet which the world knows not of, is very pathetic; knowing, as we now do, that already he was becoming painfully aware of the mental derangement of his wife—the great and abiding sorrow of his life.

Sir W. Forbes acted more discreetly with regard to Lord Hailes than he had done with regard to Beattie. He only sent him a copy of some of the paragraphs of Beattie's long letter;¹ which, he says, he thought written in a tone somewhat too peremptory in reply to so well meant a communication. At the same time, he told Beattie what he had done, and sent him a copy of what he had transmitted of his letter to Lord Hailes.

Lord Hailes took no offence at the rejection of his counsel. In his reply to Sir W. Forbes, he says: "I am sorry to see that Dr. Beattie is so resolved. I do not see that more can be said; he seems to be dissatisfied with something that you and I have said, I am sure without reason. . . . You and I have done what we thought right, Dr. Beattie has done what he thought right, and there is no more to be said. I hope that all will be for the best. When you write to Dr. Beattie, please assure him in the warmest manner of my good wishes and regard."

¹ This letter is given in full by Sir W. Forbes.

Sir William had evidently written to Beattie that he had misunderstood Lord Hailes's letters; for, in a letter dated May 8th, which closes the correspondence on this subject, Beattie, after warmly thanking Sir W. Forbes for his conduct in the whole affair, says: "How I misapprehended the meaning of Lord Hailes' letters I shall tell you afterwards; that I did misapprehend them exceedingly is certain; and when I tell you in what light they then appeared to me you will rather wonder at my moderation than at the warmth of some of my expressions. His lordship's letter, enclosed in your packet which I received to-day, is very friendly; it regards chiefly a history of Scotland which he intends soon to publish, and of which he is pleased to send me a specimen and desires my opinion. My answer I shall enclose in a frank directed to you, and leave it open that you may read it. As to my resolution of remaining here, it cannot change so long as I believe, as I most sincerely do, that my duty to myself, to my family, and to the public absolutely requires that I should not remove to Edinburgh. There is nothing to hinder my informing you that the King does me the honour to approve of my declining the Edinburgh professorship, and of my reasons for doing so. Mrs. Montagu's sentiments to the same purpose are most express and emphatical. The Archbishop of York and Lord Kinnoull and many others are of the very same mind."

1773—1774.

CHAPTER IX.

SECOND PART OF THE "MINSTREL," AND OTHER LITERARY WORK.

Circumstances attending the publication of "Essay on Truth," and other Essays, by subscription—Beattie breaks his arm—Scotticisms—Publication of Second Part of the "Minstrel" and its reception by Reviewers—Three Editions in the course of the year—Delay in preparing New Essays for Subscription Volume owing to ill-health—Bishop of Carlisle and Priestley attack "Essay on Truth"—Elected a Member of Zealand Society of Art and Sciences—Spread of "Essay on Truth" in America—Offered a Living in English Church by Mr. J. Pitt, and offer of another by the Bishop of Winchester—Declines, and gives his reasons—Beattie's income at the time these offers were declined—Peterhead—Beattie's fondness for the place—Falls on the rocks there and cuts his leg—Confined to house for a long time in consequence—Occupations during this confinement—His Early Training of his Boy—Letter on Literary Property—Extracts from the Correspondence of the Year.

DURING the winter of 1773–1774, Beattie's hours of leisure, so far as his health permitted, were employed in preparing the Essays which were to be published, along with a new edition of the "Essay on Truth," by subscription.

The new Essays were "On Poetry and Music as they affect the Mind"; "On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition"; and "On the Utility of Classical Learning." It was on the last mentioned of these Essays that Beattie was engaged this winter; for, though, in substance, they had all been written or sketched out before, he never went to the press without careful writing and rewriting of his compositions. This labour was undertaken in great measure for the correction and perfecting of his style. In these days, when intercourse between England and Scotland is so constant and so easy, and the language and idioms have been so assimilated, we can hardly realize the difficulty a Scotsman had in writing pure idiomatic English at that time. That all Scots writers and speakers of the day felt this difficulty, we may gather from Hume and others publishing lists of Scotticisms to be avoided in writing English; and Beattie's correspondence with Mr. Sylvester Douglas, afterwards Lord Glenbervie, shows the difficulty a Scotsman had in addressing an English audience in speech free from what would have been considered uncouth phraseology. That Beattie's labour to perfect his style was not considered fruitless by his contemporaries, is seen by the high commendation Burke gave it.¹

It was during this winter, also, that Beattie put the finishing

¹ See Chap. VII.

touches to the second part of the "Minstrel," which was published in the end of March or beginning of April. It might have appeared sooner, for it was ready in the end of January; but the day after it was finished Dr. Beattie had the misfortune to break his left arm a little above the wrist, and was unable, or rather forbidden, to write, and was advised to abstain from all sorts of business for some weeks. It was not till the 13th of March that he forwarded the manuscript to Mrs. Montagu for her perusal, before it was sent to the publisher. In the first edition, there was a blank in the last stanza, where Dr. Gregory's name was afterwards inserted: the reason for this he gives to Mrs. Montagu.

"The second book of the 'Minstrel' will be delivered to you along with this. You were very indulgent to that part of it which you read last summer, in which I have made no very material alterations. I am impatient to know your opinion of the other part, and particularly of the conclusion, which I do not like the better for its being on a new plan, but to which I cannot help being partial for the sake of the subject. You will see that the blank is to be filled up with the name of Gregory, a name which I forbear to write at length till I see whether the public opinion will be so favourable as to justify my taking that liberty with so dear and so respectable a friend. The lines relating to him were written (as I think I told you before) immediately after I received the melancholy news of his death, when my mind was oppressed with a weight of sorrow which I did not and which I needed not attempt to exaggerate in description."

This second, and as it proved concluding, part of the "Minstrel" was well received by the public, and ran through three editions in the course of the year. The Edinburgh reviewers criticized it very favourably. Beattie remarks to Dr. Blacklock of their verdict, "It is extremely flattering, and I am greatly obliged to them for it. The praise is indeed far too high; but that is a fault an author easily pardons. What they observe of the want of an interesting story is perfectly just. I was sensible of it long ago; but it is now too late to think of a remedy."

It was not till October that a notice of it appeared in the *London Monthly Review*, of which Creech sent Beattie the following extract: "We acknowledge the same style of harmony and the same genuine spirit of enthusiasm in this book, which distinguished the first, tho' by reason of its more moral and philosophical tenors, the descriptive part is not so copious or luxuriant, yet when topical scenes are introduced they are embellished with the same imagery and heightened with the same colouring of animated fancy."¹

For each of the three editions Beattie got fifteen guineas. Dilly in London and Creech in Edinburgh were the publishers.

The confinement caused by the breaking of his arm proved far longer than was at first anticipated, as some of the small bones at the wrist had been injured. This affected his general health and brought on a return of many of his old forms of nervous suffering, particularly his inability for mental exertion. He was obliged to lay aside all literary work for a time, and it vexed and annoyed him to feel it might be long before he was able to finish the Essays he was writing and fulfil the obligations he had come under to his subscribers. Mrs. Montagu, however, assured him he need feel no uneasiness as to this, as she had no doubt the book would pay the public well for having waited for it.

About this time, two writers attacked the views he had advocated in the "Essay on Truth." Of the first he heard accidentally. It was made by Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, "who," Beattie writes, "seems to condemn my whole book because I believe in the identity of the human soul, and that there are innate powers and implanted instincts in our nature." He considers it would be a very easy matter to give such an answer to his lordship as would show he had been rather hasty "in signing my condemnation, but perhaps it will be better to take no notice of it." And this latter course, after consulting with his friends, he followed.

The second attack was by Dr. Priestley, who, in the course of this year, published a work entitled, "An Examination of Dr. Reid's 'Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense,' Dr. Beattie's 'Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth,' and Dr. Oswald's 'Appeal to Common Sense in behalf of Religion.'" To this book, in so far as it concerned himself, Beattie sketched out a reply; but before he had time or health to prepare it for publication a sufficient interval had elapsed to show that the book was held in small estimation by the public, and that all his friends considered it unworthy of a reply.

As a counterbalance to those attacks on his writings, Beattie, about the same time, received on account of them an unexpected compliment. Holland had already shown high appreciation of the "Essay on Truth" by having had it translated into Dutch; and now the Secretary of the Zealand Society of Arts and Sciences wrote to ask him to allow himself to be put upon the list of candidates, "which in the next general meeting shall be chosen for members." As writing in English was evidently a labour to Mr. Tyeentz, the secretary, he begged a Scotch gentleman, by whom he sent his letter, to give Beattie an account of the Society, and of the duties and obligations membership entailed. This gentleman wrote: "This Society is a late institution erected under the patronage of the Prince of Orange, and I am told is in a very flourishing condition, having some of the first-rate men in Europe for its members. The only obligation you come under by accepting this offer is to

give the Society once in six years an Essay, the choice of the subject for which, as also the length of the performance, are left to your own will."

A long letter from the secretary some months afterwards informed Beattie of his unanimous election, which he would have intimated sooner had he not been waiting for an opportunity of sending him at the same time his Diploma, the Programme for the year, and a printed list of the Directors and Members. But, as he found there was no near prospect of a vessel sailing for Aberdeen, "I could not delay longer to inform you of a news which makes up a chief part of my delight. I have already made known your election here through the Dutch and French newspapers and other periodical works."¹

That his Essay was considered useful in the Western Hemisphere as well as in Europe, he was assured by a letter from St. Croix, dated in May of this year and signed "Hugh Knox," from which the following is an extract: "So much was I pleased, both with the matter and the manner of that book,² that I deem it a Christian duty to promote the reading of it as far and wide as possible, as an antidote to the poison which David Hume has had the luck of vending and spreading so abundantly in the Christian world. For this purpose I put the copy of it which I had into the hands of as many as I think are capable of reading it with profit. I have sent for a couple of dozen copies more to North America, in order to give it as wide a spread as possible."

In April of this year (1774), Lady Mayne wrote to Beattie that she was commissioned by Mr. John Pitt,³ of Arlington Street, to offer him a living in Dorsetshire, which would soon be vacant and of which he would not dispose until he knew whether Beattie would accept it or not. The yearly value of the living was £150—not a large sum, but more than he derived regularly from his professorship. In transmitting this offer to Beattie, Lady Mayne takes occasion to eulogize both Mr. Pitt and his wife for their great goodness of heart. They had during the past winter formed a society for the relief of the deserving poor in London, which soon became very numerous and comprised among its members many of high rank who gave up their thoughts and a great part of their time to the work.⁴

¹ Letter dated "Flushing, this 28th of August, 1774."

² "Essay on Truth."

³ A gentleman he had met in London and at Oxford, and who had property in Dorsetshire.

⁴ Among the members of the society were Lady Charlotte Finch and her two daughters, her sister Lady Julianna Penn, Lady Spencer, Lady Erskine, Lord and Lady Dartley, Lady Dartmouth, Mr. Hawkins Brown, the Duchess of Northumberland, Lord and Lady Willoughby, Miss Cooper, Miss Proby, and Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Lady Mayne adds, "I know this will give double satisfaction to you as it tends to confirm your system of *innate* goodness; for I am sure the greatest part of this Society did not acquire theirs either by prejudice or education, or by the London habits in which they were early initiated." Dr. Beattie, through Lady Mayne, gratefully thanked Mr. Pitt for his kind offer, but said that by the advice of his best friends he had for many months given up all thoughts of entering the Church. Of the Society she had mentioned, he remarks "It is, as you observe, an honour to my theory of virtue; but what gives me more pleasure (theorist as I am), it does honour also to the virtue and good sense of the age. I do not know anything more desirable, nor more difficult, than to lay down, and carry into execution, a proper plan for the relief of the poor, which, without encouraging idleness or vice, shall administer real comfort to the helpless and the needy."

In July, Beattie had another offer of a living in the English Church through his friend Dr. Porteus, who wrote: "I am desired by one of the Episcopal bench, whose name I am not yet at liberty to mention, to ask you whether you have any objection to taking orders in the Church of England. If you have not there is a living now vacant in his gift worth near £500 a year,¹ which will be at your service. . . . I feel myself happy of being the instrument of communicating to you so honourable and advantageous a proof of that esteem which your literary labours have secured to you amongst all ranks of people."

Beattie felt it incumbent on him to give his reason in full for declining this offer, coming as it did from a dignitary of the Church. This he did in a long letter to Dr. Porteus, from which the following are extracts. "When I consider the extraordinary reception which my weak endeavours in the cause of truth have met with, and compare the greatness of my success with the insignificance of my merit, what reasons have I not to be thankful and humble! to be ashamed that I have done so little public service and to regret so little is in my power!" His religious opinions, he said, were such as would permit his becoming a member of the Church of England, and neither his studies, way of life, nor habits of thinking, he believed, were such as would disqualify him for an ecclesiastical profession. "And I am so far from having any natural disinclination to holy orders, that I have several times, at different periods of my life, been disposed to enter into them, and have directed my studies accordingly. Various accidents, however, prevented me; some of them pretty remarkable, and such as I think I might without presumption ascribe to a particular interposition of Providence. The offer now made me is great and generous beyond all expectations. I am well aware of all the advantages and honours that would attend my

¹ It turned out to be worth considerably more.

accepting, and yet I find myself obliged in conscience to decline it—as I lately did another of the same kind (though not so considerable) that was made me on the part of a private English gentleman. The reasons which did then and do now determine me, I beg leave, sir, briefly to lay before you. I wrote the 'Essay on Truth' with the certain prospect of raising many enemies, with very faint hopes of attracting the public attention, and without any views of advancing my fortune. I published it, however, because I thought it might probably do a little good by bringing to nought, or at least lessening, the reputation of that wretched system of sceptical philosophy, which had made a most alarming progress and done incredible mischief in this country. My enemies have been at great pains to represent my views in that publication as very different; and that my principal and only motive was to make a book and if possible to raise myself higher in the world. So that if I were now to accept preferment in the Church, I should be apprehensive that I might strengthen the hands of the gainsayer, and give the world some ground to believe that my love of Truth was not quite so ardent or so pure as I have pretended. Besides, might it not have the appearance of levity and insincerity, and by some be construed into a want of principle, if I were at these years (for I am now thirty-eight) to make such an important change in my way of life, and to quit with no other *apparent* motive than that of bettering my circumstances, that Church of which I have hitherto been a member? If my book has any tendency to do good, as I flatter myself it has, I would not for the wealth of the Indies do anything to counteract that tendency; and I am afraid that tendency might in some measure be counteracted (at least in this country) if I were to give the adversary the least ground to charge me with inconsistency. It is true that the force of my reasonings cannot be really affected by my character; truth is truth, whoever be the speaker; but even truth itself becomes less respectable when spoken, or supposed to be spoken, by insincere lips. It has also been hinted to me by several persons of very sound judgment that what I have written, or may hereafter write, in favour of Religion has a chance to be more attended to if I continue a layman, than if I was to become a clergyman. . . . Nor am I without apprehensions (though some of my friends think them ill founded) that from entering so late in life, and from so remote a province, into the Church of England, some degree of ungracefulness, particularly in pronounciation, might adhere to my performances in public, sufficient to render them less pleasing and consequently less useful. Most of these reasons were repeatedly urged upon me during my stay in England last summer; and I freely own that the more I consider them the more weight they seem to have." He adds that he has reason to believe that it was the King's wish that he should remain in Scotland, because he would there find more leisure

to prosecute the studies he had begun than in England; and in Aberdeen than in Edinburgh, which had been one of his chief reasons for declining to offer himself as a candidate for the Edinburgh professorship. He had also, he said, on his return from England the previous autumn, informed the Archbishop of York, who was anxious he should become a clergyman of the English Church, of his determination against entering into holy orders, and specified his reasons, which had met with his Grace's full approbation. He concluded by begging Dr. Porteus to offer his most grateful thanks to his unknown patron, whose name he trusted there need now be no necessity of concealing from him, and to assure him that, though declining his offer, he would ever preserve a grateful remembrance of it.

On the first copy of this letter, with all its erasures and corrections, which is preserved in the correspondence, Beattie has written "Copy of a letter to Dr. Porteus, 4th August, 1774, occasioned by an offer made me by Dr. Thomas, Bishop of Winchester, of a living in the Church of England of £650 a year. It was the Rectory of Alverstoke in Hampshire, near Portsmouth. This letter was read to the King and Queen and they were pleased to approve of it. And in the summer of 1787 his Majesty on Windsor Terrace was pleased to talk with me a good while on the subject of this letter, and to express in strong terms his approbation of my conduct with regard to this offer of church preferment in England."¹

To estimate aright Beattie's character and motives in his decision against accepting this offer, it may be well to show the amount of his income from all sources for this year. His well-balanced mind allowed of no irregularity in the conduct of his worldly affairs, and his account books which have been preserved show how accurately his money matters were kept in hand, and his expenses noted.

Received during the course of the year 1774:—					£.	s.	d.
For three editions of the second book of the "Min-							
strel" at 15 guineas each	...	...	...		47	5	0
For the fourth edition of the first book	...	...	...		12	12	0
					59	17	0
Profit of my Place after deducting what is paid to the							
Widow's Fund	...	...	...	...	107	12	9
Interest of £100 from Mr. Moir	...	...	...	...	5	0	0
„ of £180 from Dr. Dun	...	...	...	...	9	0	0
					181	9	9
Pension from the King after deducting tax	...				183	10	0
					£364	19	9

¹ There is also preserved in the correspondence the letter of the Bishop of Winchester to Dr. Porteus, in which he speaks of his desire to show Dr. Beattie

Early in June, Dr. and Mrs. Beattie set out for Peterhead, both in a very poor state of health but trusting that the mineral waters and the pure sea air of that place would soon restore them. Peterhead was then a small town situated in the most easterly promontory of Sootland, and noted as a fashionable watering-place. It had its chalybeate spring, its excellent sea baths, and above all its unrivalled purity of sea air. The town juts out into the ocean, and some parts are almost surrounded by it. There is nothing to pollute, or obstruct, or shelter from the fresh breeze of the North Sea till the southern point of Norway is reached. On the north side of the town, the coast trends towards the west and for many miles is mostly a sandy beach, bordered by undulating downs covered with bent grass or the sweet smelling sea turf; while to the south, after leaving the beautiful bay which lies between the promontory on which the town stands and the Buchan-Ness, a bold coast of fine rocks opposes itself to the full force of the ocean. The variety of the coast, its grandeur, and its softer beauties, though even they partake of the rugged nature of this exposed north-easterly point—gave endless interest to the rambles of the visitors in search of health who were also lovers of Nature. The same can scarcely be said of the interior of the country, which is still for the most part bare and uninteresting to the eye, but at this time was even more so. Its interest consists in its history and its historical ruins. The castles of Ravenscraig and Inverugie,¹ whose ruins rise picturesquely on the now² wooded banks of the Ugie, date from a very remote period—Ravenscraig from early in the twelfth century; Inverugie from about 1380. The first of those castles belonged to the family of Cheyne, one of whom was the Bishop of Aberdeen who, it is said, at the command of Robert Bruce built the “Brig o’ Balgownie,” celebrated by Byron, over which went the only highway to the north from Aberdeen until the new bridge was built, the foundations of which were not laid till 1827.

The latter castle, Inverugie, belonged to the Earls Marischal, to whom in early days Peterhead owed much of its prosperity.³ Many memories of the Marischal Keith family and of other historical names are attached to this part of the country, and give it an

some mark of his esteem and good will, and begs Dr. Porteus to sound him as to whether he would accept the living he could now offer him. This letter is headed in Dr. Porteus’s handwriting, “Dr. Thomas, Bishop of Winchester, to Dr. Porteus.”

¹ Unfortunately, a large part of this fine castle has lately fallen.

² In one of Beattie’s letters to the Duchess of Gordon, he says: “This very day I intend to visit your Grace’s plantation at Ravenscraig,” from which we may gather that it was at any rate at her Grace’s suggestion that the trees which now clothe and beautify the banks in the neighbourhood of the castle began to be planted.

The title and direct line became extinct on the death of the distinguished brothers, Earl Marischal and Marshal Keith.

interest which may in some degree compensate it for its lack of beauty and scenery.

Since Beattie's days, the commercial prosperity and size of Peterhead have much increased, but its fame as a watering-place and health resort has passed away. The little "Well House," with the coat of arms of the Earls Marischal over its lowly door, is still to be seen, but the spring is dry; the Club House adjoining, where the balls and assemblies were wont to be held, is now the Custom House; and the house, handsome for its day, in which Jean Maxwell, the beautiful Duchess of Gordon, and other great personages took up their abode in the season, has fallen from its high estate and has descended to common uses. The prosperity of Peterhead now depends on its shipping and fishing.¹

To Peterhead Beattie was first attracted by his friendship with Mr. Arbuthnot, whose native place it was, and the various branches of whose family long were among the most prominent and respected of its citizens. But it became his constant summer resort from the good effect its air and waters had on his health. Sir William Forbes says: "He thought the air of the place particularly healthy and useful to his constitution, and 'I have often,' says a friend who gave me this information, 'seen him stand for a long time on the adjoining promontory, inhaling, in a fine day, the pure air of the ocean, and enjoying the majestic prospect, expressing great delight in both.' He had great confidence too in the tonic powers of the mineral spring, and of the salt water baths. His hope of being able to go through his professorial duties with comfort during the winter was in exact proportion to the length of time he had been able to spend at Peterhead the preceding summer. Nor was it on account of the waters, the baths, and the healthful air alone that he was so greatly attached to Peterhead. He loved the people, and they loved and respected him; and there were several of the venerable inhabitants of the place, for whose integrity and simplicity of character he entertained, and was often heard to express, a high regard. Although he by no means shunned the society of the numerous strangers who flocked to Peterhead in the course of the season, and sometimes dined with them at their common table, yet he spent much of his time alone in study, or in the society of a few select friends. During the fine weather he dedicated many hours to his favourite and healthful amusement of walking in the fields or along the sea-shore; and he used pleasantly to say that there was not a road, nor a footpath, nor a rock, nor any remarkable stone in the neighbourhood of Peterhead with which he was not *personally* acquainted."

Mrs. Beattie's account of the place and its ways, which she wrote

¹ Of late, efforts have been made to bring it again into notice, as a health resort famed for its pure and exhilarating air.

this summer to Lady Mayne, may be added : "Peterhead is a small town almost surrounded by the sea, remarkable for nothing but excellent mineral waters and sea baths, both of which are recommended as particularly useful in all nervous complaints. Many of the most fashionable people in Scotland spend some weeks here in the months of July and August. The company meet in a public room, where they drink the waters three times a day ; in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. Such of the company as do not live in the family way (which is by far the greatest number) dine together at an inn which was built for the accommodation of the company ; there they have a very elegant room, and very good entertainment, and there likewise they are made to pay very well for it. They generally breakfast and drink tea with one another in the mornings and evenings at their own lodgings. We live in the family way, which is by far the most agreeable, and mix with the company as often as we please."

During this season, however, Beattie did not derive much benefit from his stay in Peterhead. The month of June he describes as cold, stormy, and rainy to a degree, and with a perseverance he had never before seen at that season ; and early in July he fell among the rocks, getting his leg so severely out that he did not wholly recover the use of it till after his return to Aberdeen in September.

The confinement caused by this accident was enlivened by his friend Major Mercer being in the neighbourhood, visiting their common friend Mr. Lundi, the minister of Lonmay. A letter in rhyme, written in the name of and signed by his little boy, and a ludicrous description of all his own misadventures, both addressed to the Major, show that Beattie did not mope over his enforced confinement.

His boy must have done much to enliven him. The child was a constant source of pleasure and intense interest to his father, who from the first carefully watched over and cultivated his bright intelligence. What he was at this early stage his mother describes in a letter to Lady Mayne, written at the end of this year : "He was six years of age on the eighth of this month (November). He is remarkably lively, healthy, and good humoured, though fond of reading and writing, in both of which he has been almost self taught. He prefers poetry to every other kind of reading. The 'Minstrel,' Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' he reads and remembers, and can repeat the greater part of these poems from his memory with great propriety. He goes to church often, where he has all the appearance of devout attention. By some accident he had got a Common Prayer Book, in which he found the prayer for the King, and one day, upon hearing his Majesty's name mentioned, to our surprise he stood up and, holding up his little hand and [raising] his eyes, pronounced the prayer with all the ardour and sincerity of

a devout clergyman. He has an excellent distinct voice and great appearance of gravity, so that it had a very good effect upon his hearers. He still continues to say that prayer every day without being desired. I one day asked him his reason for praying for the King in particular. He answered that he understood the King had done much good to papa."

In the Memoir he wrote of his son, Beattie says he delayed giving the boy any religious instruction until he thought him sufficiently advanced in intelligence to understand what he was told. He was also desirous to make a trial how far his own reason could go in tracing out with a little direction the great first principle of all religion, the being of a God. The device he employed for this purpose, when the child was about five years old, has often been told. In the garden he sowed the initials of his boy's name in cress; which, when the child discovered, he refused to believe had come there by chance. The conversation that followed Beattie gives in substance, though not in the exact words, which he had forgotten. "So you think," I said, "that what appears so regular as the letters of your name cannot be by chance." "Yes," said he, with firmness, "I think so." "Look at yourself," I replied, "and consider your hands and fingers, your legs and feet and other limbs; are they not regular in their appearance and useful to you?" He said they were. "Came you then hither," I said, "by chance?" "No," he answered, "that cannot be, something must have made me." "And who is that something?" I asked. He said he did not know. I took particular notice that he did not say, as Rousseau fancies a child in like circumstances would say, that his parents made him. I had now gained the point I had aimed at; and saw that his reason taught him, though he could not so express it, that what begins to be must have a cause, and what is formed with regularity must have an intelligent cause. I therefore told him the name of the Great Being who made him and all the world; concerning whose adorable nature I gave him such information as I thought he could in some measure apprehend. The lesson affected him greatly, and he never forgot either it or the circumstances that introduced it."

In the early part of this year (1774), Beattie had expressed the opinion that a late decision, by which booksellers were declared to have no exclusive right to publish works of which they had bought the copyright from the authors, was a decision "attended with bad consequences, not to booksellers only but to authors also, and to literature in general." Edward Dilly begged him to write out his reasons for this opinion, as the booksellers intended to apply for an Act of Parliament to counteract this decision in some measure. Beattie did so in a letter to Dilly, which, when the subject came before Parliament, was read in the House of Commons. A copy of this letter was among the papers preserved.

CHAPTER X.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS'S "ALLEGORICAL PICTURE."

Apology for delay in appearance of Subscription Volume owing to bad health—Goes to London to visit Dr. Porteus—Mr. Montagu's illness and death—Extracts from Journal—Visits to Bulstrode and Gotton Park, to Mr. Scott, at Amwell near Ware; Mr. Peckard at Huntingdon; Mrs. Montagu at Denton Hall—Sir Joshua Reynolds presents Beattie with the "Allegorical Picture" he had painted—The Picture now in the Picture Gallery in Marischal College, Aberdeen—Beattie on his return home able to resume Literary Work—Extracts from Correspondence.

It was not to be supposed that, after a summer of confinement to the house, Beattie would improve in health or in strength during the winter. As the College Session was drawing to a close, he wrote to Mrs. Montagu that he had never passed a winter in such a state of warfare with a shabby constitution. He had at last been compelled to give up attempting to write, and this entailed further delay in the publication of the volume promised to his subscribers—which in his weakness greatly distressed him. In order to apologize to them, he had a card printed, in which he explained the reason of the delay and said that, in case of his death, he would endeavour to leave his papers in such a state that they could be published. Mrs. Montagu kindly undertook to circulate this card, though she assured him there was no need for distressing himself on the subject.

A pressing invitation from Dr. and Mrs. Porteus that Dr. and Mrs. Beattie should spend the early part of the summer with them at Lambeth, came at this time opportunely, as change of air and scene was the physician's prescription for Beattie's ailment. Letters also from Mrs. Montagu and Lady Mayne urged his coming to London and giving them a share of his company while there. So, finding by a short excursion to visit his relatives that he was able to travel, he gladly started on his southern journey accompanied by Mrs. Beattie. Major Mercer and his family were at the same time leaving Aberdeen for the south of France on account of Mrs. Mercer's health, and the two families arranged to travel to London together, the Beatties assisting their friends by taking some of the children in their chaise. A hearty and affectionate reception awaited the Beatties at the Rectory of Lambeth; and, indeed, from all his former friends Beattie met with a warm welcome. Mrs. Montagu he found in great anxiety about her husband's health. At that time (the beginning of May), it was not expected that Mr. Montagu could

survive many hours, but he lingered till the nineteenth of the month.

In consequence of Mr. Montagu's illness and death, Beattie saw less of Mrs. Montagu than he would otherwise have done, but his time was fully occupied by other old and many new friends. These latter were chiefly dignitaries of the Church of England, whom he met either at the Rectory or the Palace of Lambeth. He dined twice at the Palace on days of public reception; and, as the Archbishop was anxious to have more conversation with him than was possible on such occasions he again dined there, accompanied by Mrs. Beattie and Dr. and Mrs. Porteus. On the public reception days, he had met a large assembly of Bishops and other persons of distinction, to whom he was introduced and by whom he was very cordially received, many of them urging him to visit them before his return to Scotland.

Though obliged to decline most of these invitations, he was able to accept those of the Bishops of London, Rochester, Chester, and Winchester. The last he describes as "a most cheerful and agreeable old man," who would not allow him to thank him for his offer of the living of Alverstoke.

Beattie has left a journal of part of the time he spent in England this year, which, though by no means so full as the record of his former visit, gives a sketch of its principal events. Of this a short summary and a few extracts may be given.

On going to a music shop (Napier's) to borrow a bass viol and some music books at Dr. Porteus's desire, he was shown a little song of his, "Could Melting Notes, etc., etc.," very well set to music.

"May 24th.—Dined together with Dr. Porteus in Dr. Heberden's, where were Mr. Whitehead, Poet Laureate, a modest gentlelike man; Mr. Mandit (who wrote a famous pamphlet called "Considerations on the German War"), a lively, agreeable man, one of the most spirited and most sensible friends of Lord Bute's administration I have met with; and a good deal of company besides. Mr. Mandit assured me in the hearing of the whole company, none of whom contradicted him, that Lord Chatham, while minister, was often so mad and furious as to be confined in his own house in a strait waistcoat.

"26th.—Went with Sir William Mayne to the levée. The King knew me at first sight, and though in great haste to get to the House of Lords, spoke to me with his wonted affability; asked me how my studies were going forward; and observed that I looked much better than when he saw me last. After the levée Sir William took me to the House of Lords, where the King put an end to the Session of Parliament by a speech from the throne, pronounced with admirable grace and propriety. Here I met with Mr. Edmund Burke, Mr. Thrale and some other acquaintances. . . . Mrs. Beattie

was also in the house with Dr. and Mrs. Porteus. Dined with Mr. George Onslow.¹ He presented me with a ring having on it a very good head of the King enamelled, which he desired me to wear for his sake.

"*June 1st.*—Went with Sir William Mayne to the Drawing Room, which was very crowded.² Received a letter from Mr. Mason, of York, dissuading me from answering Priestley and inviting me to see him on my return northwards.

"Mr. Hawkins Brown called for me. His opinion with regard to Dr. Priestley (who is of his acquaintance) is that I ought not to think his work worthy of an answer, that it is very little read or esteemed, and that it is much blamed by Dr. Price and other of his friends." The Bishop of Bristol also, "in a very earnest manner," dissuaded him from taking any notice of Priestley's work.

"*June 6th.*—Dr. Porteus and I went to the opera ('*La Buona Figliola*'), a ridicule both of poetry and music—contemptible in the lowest degree, the music bad, the singing tolerable, the action beneath criticism."

Next day, the Beatties bade adieu to their kind hosts, Dr. and Mrs. Porteus, and removed to Sir William Mayne's house in St. James's Square. Sir William and Lady Mayne were gone to Gatton Park, but had insisted that the Beatties should occupy their town house, when Dr. Porteus left London for Hampton, till Beattie's business should be finished. What detained him in London seems chiefly to have been his desire to help Principal Campbell, who had just come from Aberdeen to find a publisher for one of his works,³ as an entry in the Diary is: "*10th.*—Called for Dr. Campbell and mentioned his manuscripts to Mr. Strachan (with whom I dined) and strongly recommended it. He is to see Dr. Campbell soon and give his best advice about the disposal of it. At Mr. Strachan's I met with Dr. Anderson, Professor at Glasgow, who in a coffee-house gave me an account (which entertained me not a little) that at Glasgow it is believed I am to be Principal of that College in the event of Leechman's death,⁴ and that Dr. Robertson of Edinburgh is determined to oppose me all he can. I told Anderson that I had no such views, though I had received anonymous letters urging me to it. But I advised him not to let this be known, that he might more effectually promote Dr. Reid's interest, who probably will be a candidate and whom Dr. Anderson wishes to promote all he can. On asking whence the report had arisen

¹ A Privy Councillor and one of the Lords of the Treasury.

² The Queen, on hearing from Dr. Majendie that Dr. Beattie had been at the Drawing Room, expressed concern that, owing to the crowd, she had not seen him or she would have spoken to him "on account of the regard due to his merit."

³ His "*Philosophy of Rhetoric.*"

⁴ Dr. Leechman lived ten years after this.

concerning me, he said the place was in the Crown's gift, and that my interest at Court is supposed at Edinburgh and Glasgow to be very great." During their stay in St. James's Square, the Beatties were much with Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds. Of the many notices of them in the journal, the most interesting is—"14th.—Supped with Sir Joshua Reynolds and read to him those passages of my discourse on poetry which relate to him and to the general ideas which it is equally the business of the poet and painter to imitate. Sir Joshua approves highly of the whole; but modestly objected to my mentioning him at the same time with Raphael, saying that Raphael was a name of too great magnitude to suffer a comparison with any other; but in my opinion I do Sir Joshua no more than justice."

At this time, also, the Beatties spent a few days with the Dowager Duchess of Portland at Bulstrode, where they found "much agreeable company"—among others Dr. Barnard, Provost of Eton, a man of great learning and good humour, from whom they got a hearty invitation to visit him at Eton.

Beattie did not leave London until he thought he saw Dr. Campbell's difficulties as to the disposal of his manuscript in a fair way to be overcome. In the entry in his journal of the day previous to his leaving for Gatton Park (June 19th), he says:—

"Principal Campbell supped with us. His manuscript is now given to Strachan who has put it in the hands of Adam Smith. I advise the Principal not to meddle himself in the disposal of it, but to leave that matter to Mr. Rose and others of his friends, who will probably get more money for it than he would be inclined to ask. . . . I have again and again recommended it to Strachan in the strongest terms, yet no more than it deserves."

The next morning, they set out for Gatton Park, where they were received by their host and hostess "with the most cordial kindness," and spent the evening in a long walk among the lawns and groves of this delightful place.

By July 9th, we find Dr. and Mrs. Beattie again in St. James's Square, on the eve of starting for Scotland. On their way home, they spent two days with the Quaker, Mr. Scott, at Amwell, near Wara.¹ From there they went to Mr. Peckard, at Huntingdon. The Bishops of Lincoln and Peterborough had begged that, when Beattie visited him, Mr. Peckard would give them an opportunity of meeting him; so they dined with the Bishop of Lincoln at Buckden, four miles from Huntingdon, but Peterborough was too far off the road to allow of Beattie's going there, as he had promised to be with Mrs. Montagu in Northumberland as early in the month as possible. Of her place there, Denton Hall, which they reached

¹ Description of Mr. Scott and his house in Sir William Forbes's Life.

on July 17th, Mrs. Beattie gives the following description to Lady Mayne :—

“This place is situated in a pleasant country about three miles west of Newcastle, and about a mile distant from the river Tyne. The house is old, and has never been very elegant or commodious, neither is there much policy about it. A mile distant from the house are many coal pits which are wrought by engines of so terrible a kind that I have never ventured to go near enough to see them.”

After leaving Denton Hall, they made no long stay on their way, as they were impatient to be home. They reached Aberdeen safely on August 5th, not, however, without an accident by the way. During the last stage of their journey, the axletree of their chaise broke, and the carriage was overturned within a few feet of a precipice. Fortunately, they were not hurt; and, after waiting for another chaise to be brought from an inn three miles off, they continued their journey and got home during the evening.

Shortly after his return home, Beattie wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds with regard to the very generous offer Sir Joshua had made to him of the picture he had painted of him. After grateful acknowledgments of Sir Joshua's kindness, he proceeds: “You desired me, if I did not choose to keep the picture in my own possession, to give it to some one of my best friends. In this view, sir, as well as in others, there is no person who has so good a title to it as yourself, for I fear the world would pronounce me lost to all sense of modesty if I were to adorn my own house with so splendid a memorial of my good fortune.”

He goes on to say that he would have asked Sir Joshua to keep the picture in his own collection, had not another way of disposing of it occurred to him. What that was has been carefully erased, and cannot have been ultimately approved of, as Dr. Beattie's scruples were overcome,¹ and he became possessor of the picture. It now hangs in the picture gallery of the University of Aberdeen, built on the site of the old Marischal College where Beattie so long taught. The picture was left to the University, at their death, by the Misses Margaret and Helen Glennie, grandnieces of Dr. Beattie. Unlike many of Sir Joshua's pictures, it retains its brightness and vividness of colouring in almost as great perfection as when fresh from the artist's easel. This has been accounted for according to some by the fact that, during his lifetime, Beattie, too modest to display Sir Joshua's magnificent compliment to himself to all comers, had a curtain drawn before it; and according to others by the fact that it was entirely the work of the great master himself, who in painting it made no experiments with colours, but only used those the lasting qualities of which were known.

¹ They were overcome by Miss Reynolds representing that the gift was more to his son than to himself, and, therefore, he had no right to refuse it.

Beattie, on his return home with renovated health, lost no time in resuming the work of preparing his essays for the press. Before the middle of September, he had transcribed the whole essay on "Laughter," corrected many passages, expunged others, and added a few; as, for example, when in treating of the influence of our religion in refining conversation and giving delicacy to manner, he added some remarks on Lord Chesterfield's letter. He pointed out the absurdity and folly, not to speak of it in its more serious aspect, of supposing that true delicacy, and refinement of speech and manner, can be obtained by external rules and the use of mechanical phrases, looks, and gestures, and showed that such graces must proceed from the heart.

His work was, however, again stopped by illness, joined with anxiety both on Mrs. Beattie's and on his boy's account, the latter being attacked by a lingering fever. A few days in the country after they were all convalescent, seem to have braced him sufficiently for his college labours, but he was obliged to be very careful, and found, with all his other duties, two hours a day were the utmost he could devote during the college session to his literary work.

1776.

CHAPTER XI.

SUBSCRIPTION VOLUME, AND OVERWORK.

Subscription Volume printed in Edinburgh—New Preface containing an answer to a complaint of Mr. Hume's—Hume's death—Beattie spends the Summer at Dee Castle and Peterhead—Allows Creech to print the "Minstrel," and a selection of his other poems, in his edition of *Forty Volumes of the Works of British Poets*—Proposed New Magazine to be published in Edinburgh—Beattie's hints as to how books should be reviewed—Sum realized by Beattie from the Subscription Volume—Letters from Mrs. Montagu—Sir Joshua Reynolds sends his Picture to Beattie—Sir William Forbes's serious illness—Mr. Cameron and his Poems and Paraphrases—Friendship with Mr. Baron Gordon, of Cluny Castle—Letters from Mr. Sylvester Douglas, Lord Hailes, and Mrs. Boscawen.

EARLY in May, 1776, Beattie was ready to send his subscription volume to the press. Having done his best for the contents of the book, his next anxiety was that, externally, it should be worthy the acceptance of the subscribers. He was advised to have it printed in Edinburgh, as it would be more elegantly and correctly done there than in London. So, having ascertained from Mr. Creech that he would undertake the work, and that he would promise for its being "as elegant a printed book as ever was produced in this country," Beattie went to Edinburgh with his manuscript that he might himself inspect both the type and the paper that were to be used. The volume was to consist of about eight hundred pages, of which the "Essay on Truth" would occupy about three hundred and twenty, and the new essays and preface would fill the remainder.

In writing to Mrs. Montagu, he says of his work: "My additional essays I have finished with the greatest care I was capable of, and I am inclined to think that in composition they are the most accurate of all my work. I have endeavoured to make them perspicuous and entertaining. The new edition of the 'Essay on Truth' is correct in almost every page. . . . Additional hints are thrown in occasionally, to obviate some of the remarks of those authors who have written against me. But I have mentioned none of these gentlemen by name. And in a general preface I have given such an account of this new edition, and such reasons for not answering my adversaries more particularly, as I hope will offend nobody, and do neither me nor my work any discredit."

The concluding pages of the preface, however, contain an answer to a complaint that Mr. Hume had made in an advertisement of a new edition of his *Essay*, just published, that several writers who had

written against his philosophy, had directed all their batteries against his "Treatise of Human Nature," a juvenile work which the author never acknowledged. The complaint shows that Mr. Hume was by no means indifferent to the attacks made on his philosophy, as he is generally represented to have been. The date of Beattie's preface is April 30th, 1776, about the time when Mr. Hume was bidding adieu to Edinburgh and his friends, fearing he would never see them again. Hume went to Bath for his health, and seems at first to have benefited by the change, but the improvement was but temporary. He returned to Edinburgh, and died in the month of August.

It was a great relief to Beattie when his book was fairly in the hands of the printers; the labour it had cost, in addition to his college duties, had been too much for him, and had brought him so low in strength and spirit that he had serious thoughts of resigning his professorship, as he feared he would never again be equal to his duties. Before determining on this, however, he was willing to try what the summer would do for him, and thinking that "solitude and tranquillity," in conjunction with pure air and goat-whey, were the remedies he required, the family set out for Dee Castle early in the season. This was "a solitary, romantic place" on Deeside, between thirty and forty miles from Aberdeen, where once a castle had been, though all that now remains of it is part of the walls of a cottage which occupies its site.¹ That he might give himself complete rest from study, Beattie had determined not to take with him "a single book except Virgil and Homer, who have always been my very good friends"; but by the time their two months' stay at Dee Castle was over, Beattie found it was not for one whose bodily ailments were accompanied by great depression of spirits, to go for change to what at that time was an extremely solitary spot. Even his good friends Virgil and Homer were not at all times able to make him forget himself and his ailments as a living friend, though inferior in intellect to those great bards, might have done. His bodily health improved; but, as he did not find his spirits much better, he wisely determined to spend the autumn at Peterhead, where he would find pleasant society, that being the season when Peterhead was most resorted to by visitors.

Shortly before leaving Deeside, the Beatties heard of the elevation of their friend Sir William Mayne to the peerage, with the title of Lord Newhaven—a piece of news they had been expecting for some time.

Mr. Creech was at this time publishing an edition of the works of

¹ Not many miles farther up the Dee were the then lately discovered springs at Pananich, the virtues of which young Cameron had lately employed his muse in singing. Beattie would certainly visit them, though he does not seem to have resorted to them as a cure.

the British Poets in forty volumes, and requested that he might be allowed to include Beattie's works in the series. Beattie agreed to the "Minstrel" being published, but it alone. Creech expostulated against the exclusion of *all* his other poems, pleading that, though despised by himself, they had many admirers among the public; that they were already known as his work, and would continue to make a separate collection if he printed the "Minstrel" alone, whereas a selection joined to the "Minstrel" would make the distinction, and only the best would be preserved. Beattie yielded, and authorized the publication of six of his minor poems, though his wish had been to consign them all to oblivion.¹

Mr. Arbuthnot and some other gentlemen had been for some time anxious to bring out a new magazine and review in Edinburgh, and during this summer, finding that Sir W. Forbes highly approved of the plan and Mr. Creech gladly acquiesced in it, Mr. Arbuthnot wrote to Beattie begging his assistance in the undertaking. The success of the publication, he urged, would very much depend upon the manner in which it was conducted for the first year, and he adds that he would not "offend your modesty by telling you how much splendour and reputation every performance of yours will confer on it."

Beattie willingly agreed, "unless my health fail altogether, to help by contributing short essays or reviewing a book now and then, and I should not be altogether averse to dip a little into politics, or perhaps in poetry." As to remuneration for his articles, which Mr. Arbuthnot had insisted he should accept, he says he will take none until he was satisfied that the profits were great, and that he himself had been in some degree instrumental in making them so. When offering some hints as to the plan of the work and the proper method of conducting it, he says, with regard to reviewing books: "In giving an account of new books, I would aim to rather inform the public, than give vent to my own admiration or dislike; and be brief and modest in panegyric, and in censure very sparing and very merciful, except where the work animadverted upon appeared to have been written with a bad intention. To publish a dull book is a misfortune rather than a fault, and ought always to appear so in the eye of the candid critic. Neglect is perhaps more than an adequate punishment for dulness, especially as we consider that an author has always some merit, if he only intends to instruct or amuse innocently. Reviewers are apt to begin their account of a book with some commonplace observation of their own. This, I think, should be avoided, except where it is necessary to prepare the reader for understanding what is to follow, and tends to supply some omission

¹ The pieces he permitted to be published were "Retirement, An Ode"; "Elegy on a Lady"; "The Pigmies and the Cranes"; "The Hares, a Fable"; "Ode on Lord Hay's Birthday"; and "The Hermit."

of the author. A review ought to consist of three parts and no more—an account of the author's plan; a specimen of his manner; and a brief character of his work; to which, in some cases, might be added a short account of his life."

Towards the middle of September, Dr. and Mrs. Beattie and their boy paid several visits. They spent some days at Banff with Mrs. Gordon¹ and her daughter, who afterwards married Mr. Forbes, of Seaton, a property in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. From there, they went to Cullen House, and then to Auchiries, where Mr. Forbes, the son of the good old Lord Pitsligo,² and his wife, a daughter of Mr. Ogilvie, of Auchiries, lived.

During the summer, the printing of the subscription volume had been progressing. With Mr. Creech it seems to have been a labour of love that the book should appear in as perfect a form as possible, and with this view he begged that not only the printing, but also the binding and dispatching of the copies, might be done under his inspection. To this Beattie agreed, and desired that copies might be specially bound for presentation to the King and Queen.

There were eight hundred copies of the quarto volume³ printed. Beattie was advised to print more, and take his chance of the sale, "but," he writes to Mrs. Montagu, "though the booksellers who gave me leave to print this edition had laid me under no restraint, I thought it unfair to print more than were absolutely necessary, lest I should hurt the sale of the octavo edition, which is the only thing (including the copyright of the three additional Essays) which they have to indemnify themselves for granting me this indulgence . . . the *additional* Essays alone, if printed with a type somewhat larger, would make a quarto volume, which as new books, and especially subscription books, are commonly sold, would fetch a guinea, independently of the 'Essay on Truth.' This is according to the plan which I laid down at the beginning, for I was determined to give no ground even to the adversary to charge me with avarice."⁴

¹ Widow of an Admiral Gordon.

² Deprived of his title and lands on account of his participation in the Rebellion of Forty-Five.

³ The book was also printed in octavo for sale to the general public and for behoof of the booksellers who had given Beattie permission to publish the "Essay on Truth."

⁴ After paying all expenses, about four hundred guineas were realized by this subscription volume, a sum which more than satisfied Beattie, but which disappointed Mrs. Montagu and Lady Newhaven.

The idea of this publication by subscription originated with Mrs. Montagu at a time when it was quite uncertain whether anything would be done in any other way to increase Beattie's small income, and he had only agreed to the proposal on the understanding that it was to be conducted privately. It was neither to be advertised nor committed to the booksellers, nor was anyone to be *solicited* to become a subscriber. It was only to be mentioned to those whom his friends were certain would be glad to testify in this way their "approbation of such a book and such an author." (In a letter from Lady Newhaven.) These

Mrs. Montagu's plan for passing the winter and spring in the south of France had been frustrated by an attack of illness which seized her on her way to Dover. She regretted this chiefly on account of her nephew, whom she was educating to be her heir, and whom she wished to acquire facility in speaking French before he was of an age to press on his more serious studies; but her detention in England enabled her to be with her friend the Dowager Duchess of Portland on her recovery from a very severe illness. Of the pleasure this gave her she writes to Beattie:—

"I am sure you will rejoice to hear the Duchess of Portland is now well. It has pleased God to preserve still to us an example to the great, a protector of the unfortunate, and the most amiable and valuable of friends. I had the happiness of passing yesterday evening with her in her private dressing-room, in which I passed many of those youthful hours which dance away with down upon their feet, and never did their sweetest pace and gayest measure give me such heartfelt delight as last night's reflection on the many mercies that had led us both such a series of years through a period of innocence to the present time, so that we can look back with pleasure, and forward with hope, and while we remain here by mercies past, indulge a wish to cheer each other through the declining path of life."

In the end of May, Mrs. Montagu was able to go to Paris for some months, taking with her Miss Gregory¹ and her young nephew. Shortly before leaving England, she wrote to Beattie of Garrick's retirement from the stage. In many respects, she thinks, he makes a greater sacrifice to the joys of private life than the Emperor Charles V. did: "for our friend always topped his part, was admired in every scene, and applauded in every act, and added dignity and grace to every character and office he assumed, and was unrivalled in the theatre."

Mrs. Montagu returned to England in October, and, in giving Beattie an account of how her time had been spent, she remarks:—

"As I passed a good deal of my time with the Litterati at Paris, you may imagine I heard much of the manner of Mr. Hume's taking leave of the world. 'Les Philosophes' (as they call themselves) were pleased that he supported the infidel character with so much constancy."

stipulations were closely adhered to, and yet Beattie must have been gratified by running his eye over the list of subscribers published at the beginning of his book, comprising as it does so many well-known names, both lay and cleric. It was headed by the Duke of Athol; yet of Scotch names there are comparatively few, as was to be expected from the subscription being in the hands of English ladies. Other Scotsmen besides Lord Kinnoull probably expressed their regret that they had not been given an opportunity of joining in the subscription, having never heard of it till the book was published.

The list of subscribers' names was not in the earlier issue of the "Subscription Copies of Essays," dated 1776, but appears in that of 1777.

¹ Dr. John Gregory's daughter.

It was during this autumn that Sir Joshua Reynolds sent his picture of Beattie to Aberdeen. Copies of the print of the picture had been received in Aberdeen and its neighbourhood early in the year, as Mrs. Beattie, in writing to Lady Mayne in February, with pardonable wifely pride relates the honour Lord Erroll had done it by hanging it over the mantelpiece in the principal drawing-room of Slains Castle. Beattie sent a copy of the print to his friend Mrs. Arbuthnot, a gift which greatly delighted the old lady. She does not say she was disappointed in the likeness of Beattie; but she evidently did not think it happy in its expression, and she remarks that, perhaps, it is impossible for art to do complete justice to the countenance of a person of great sensibility.¹

Towards the end of December, Beattie was much distressed by hearing of the sudden and alarming illness of Sir William Forbes. For two days, little hope was entertained of his recovery, but, on the third, the symptoms improved, and from that time recovery was rapid. Knowing how great Beattie's anxiety on his friend's account would be, Sir William's partner, Mr. Hunter,² sent him a daily bulletin. The respect and affection Sir William had won from all classes was shown by the interest this illness excited, which Mr. Hunter wrote was not confined to friends, but was shared in by all; and of which Creech wrote: "Never was there a man more universally beloved than Sir William. During his illness every person in this place seemed anxiously interested about him. There was a general dejection over the whole city."

It was during the summer of this year that his old pupil Mr. Cameron first mentioned to Beattie his design of employing his poetical gift in versifying parts of Scripture, which design he afterwards carried out, enriching the collection of paraphrases used in the Psalmody of the Church of Scotland with several beautiful contributions.³ He enclosed a specimen of his paraphrasing for Beattie's criticism, as was his wont with his early productions. The previous year we find Beattie thanking him for a reading of "your pretty poem," which he had written to celebrate the virtues of the newly discovered spring at Pananich, in the neighbourhood of his old home.

¹ The truth is that the portrait of any man in middle life brought, in an allegorical picture, into proximity with so lovely a creature as Sir Joshua's Angel of Truth, must suffer by the comparison.

² Afterwards, Sir Hunter Blair, his partner.

³ Cameron's wholly original compositions are said to be but two, the fourteenth and seventeenth paraphrases; but the sixty-sixth ("How bright those glorious spirits shine") is so changed from Watts' hymn, from which it is said to owe its origin, that it may almost be attributed solely to him. This, however, was but a small part of the work he did in the revision of the paraphrases for the 1781 collection, which still is the authorized version. He made changes sometimes slight, but often very considerable, in probably thirty-three of those that had appeared in the former collections. — "MacLagan on the Paraphrases."

Some months after, a poem entitled, "On reading Dr. Beattie's 'Essay on Truth,'" is enclosed in a long letter from Cameron ; which gives an account of the circumstances in which he is placed and affords a key to the outburst, both in the letter and in the poem, of affectionate respect and gratitude to the

". . . Friend
Whose care auspicious principled my youth."

Cameron had left the rural shades of Deeside, and was now tutor in a family in Edinburgh, where he was happy and comfortable. But the tone of society, and (though he only indicates this) the attacks upon Dr. Beattie, distress the young man. It is, on the one hand, the boldness of the infidel in the expression of his opinions and his imputation of bigotry, and personal invective to those who oppose him ; and on the other, the diffidence of the believer seemingly ashamed to defend his cause, that equally excite his indignation and sorrow. Of the latter he says: "It is now become quite the *mode* to keep the *Truth* under and never suffer it to offend the ear of the polite libertine. This has now got the sanction of the times, and no wonder when such the times are. This constitutes the spirit of our so much boasted genteel and fashionable *Moderation*, which may justly be termed a perfect indifference to Truth, Nature, and all kinds of Religion."

Beattie replied :—

". . . I am greatly honoured by your spirited poem. I approve and applaud of your principles, but your zeal for me has made you compliment me much more than I deserve. Your poetical composition is improving daily. There are some passages in this not quite clear, which on a revisal you will easily discover. The objections to the 'Essay on Truth' which you hint at have been often urged by the Edinburgh critics. The reasons it is not difficult to discover which make them particularly severe on that performance. But I have met with more candour and less prejudice elsewhere. Even in Edinburgh there are many worthy and learned persons who have done me the honour to approve what I did with a sincere purpose, to advance the cause of Truth, and do good to society. But the number of the Infidels and of *non-Liquets* in regard to Religion is greater in and about Edinburgh than in any other part of Great Britain. This I hint to you in confidence, because I wish you to be on your guard against them, and I know you will be so. Your good principles and your good heart will secure you against the sneers and sophistries of persons who dislike Religion out of prejudice, and are dissatisfied with the evidence of it, which they do not understand because they have never examined it. Bear always in mind this truth, which admits of the most satisfactory proof : no person of a good heart understands Christianity without wishing it

to be true ; and no person of a good judgment ever studied its evidence impartially and with a sincere wish that it might be true who did not really find it so. I believe I have expressed myself very ill, but you will see my meaning."¹

With regard to Mr. Cameron's design of versifying parts of Scripture, Beattie writes :—

"I approve greatly of your design of versifying some passages of Scripture for the enlargement of our Psalmody. You cannot employ your muse in a way more honourable to yourself or more useful to your country. The specimen you sent to me I think extremely good. . . . You judge very rightly in regard to the style that is most proper in these compositions. It should be perfectly simple and perspicuous, without any quaintness, and free from all superfluous epithets. At the same time it should be harmonious and elegant, and equally remote from rusticity and affectation. In a word, it should have dignity to please the best judges, and a plainness adapted to the meanest capacity."

This year saw the beginning of Beattie's intimate friendship and long correspondence with Cosmo Gordon, of Cluny Castle. They had met the previous summer in Edinburgh at Lord Monboddo's, when, among other literary subjects, the eleventh book of the *Æneid* had been discussed. Mr. Baron Gordon² in his first letter reverts to this discussion. He has been lately reading the book, and has formed some opinions on it, of which he is diffident, unless they correspond with better judgments, and having forgotten what Beattie had said on the subject, begs him to repeat it, adding : "You may with some justice think this a singular request from a senator, but Parliament is still adjourned, and I neither read novels nor go a-shopping in the forenoon."

Mr. Sylvester Douglas, in writing to tell of the success of a book he had written, and about the publication of which he had consulted Beattie, mentions, among other new books, Mr. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and its success, "though even the Free-thinkers blame his ironical sneers against religion."

Mrs. Boscawen, widow of Admiral Boscawen, who gave the name to the "Blue Stocking Society," of which his wife was one of the original members, wrote to Beattie in the autumn of this year, soliciting an introduction for her son to some one in Glasgow who would be "a sensible companion, and direct him in a strange country." He was an officer quartered in Glasgow, but being only eighteen years of age, his mother was anxious he should take advantage of all opportunities for prosecuting his education, "and Scotland is perhaps extremely favourable for that purpose." After explaining her wishes further, she apologizes for the "presumption"

¹ Cameron afterwards became Minister of Kirknewton.

² Mr. Gordon was one of the Barons of H. M. Exchequer in Scotland.

of her request: "All I can say is, that you will at least commend the cause, which is a dread of that scepticism and infidelity which are supposed to prevail in Scotland; and to whom can I address myself so well as to Dr. Beattie, for a guide and companion entirely free from this cruel infection?"

Dr. Beattie answered this letter by recommending Lieutenant Boscawen to Mr. Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy in Glasgow.

1777.

CHAPTER XII.

YEAR OF IMPAIRED HEALTH.

Favourable reception of Beattie's new *Essays*—Letters with regard to them from Dr. Blacklock, Lord Kinnoull, Mrs. Montagu, Mr. Creech, and Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee—Mrs. Montagu's remarks on Beattie's style and his reply—Presentation of the book to the King and Queen—Beattie's travels in search of health—Is presented with the Freedom of the City by Paisley—Gordon Castle—Mrs. Elisabeth Rose of Kilravock's account of the mode of life in the Castle, and of her meeting the Beatties there—Beattie's health not improved—Obliged to have an Assistant during the College Session—Letter published anonymously at Oxford addressed to Adam Smith, whose "Life of Hume" had just appeared, of which Dr. Horne, the Vice-Chancellor and President of Magdalen College, afterwards acknowledged himself the author—Edition of a Small Copy of the "Minstrel" and other Poems, including a Rhyming Letter to the Honourable Charles Boyd, published.

In the beginning of 1777, Beattie was cheered by hearing of the favourable reception of his new *Essays* by the general public as well as by his friends. Dr. Blacklock congratulates him not only on the excellency of his work, but also on the warm and cordial reception "it has found from the public in this part of the world. Even faction and ill-natured criticism are silent, and Dr. Beattie is not named without such testimonies of sincere approbation and esteem as discover themselves to be real emanations from the hearts and souls of those by whom they are uttered." This must have been particularly pleasant news to Beattie, as it was in Edinburgh he had been formerly most severely criticized.

Dr. Blacklock himself was reading the "Essay on Truth" for the seventh time: "but my avidity of pursuing the task seems rather increased by the frequency of repetition." He goes on to explain that, at a time when he was overwhelmed by disappointments and mortification and depression of spirits, he had been inclined to adopt the philosophy of Mr. Hume; and that it was to the "Essay on Truth" that he owed his final emancipation from its influence.

Of the new *Essays*, the one that pleases Lord Kinnoull best is that on "Classical Learning."

"One of your additional *Essays* is more particularly adapted to my taste. I have long and repeatedly lamented the fashionable prejudice against the study of the ancient languages as fatal to solid learning and sound erudition. It is a particular satisfaction to me to find that subject handled by so able an advocate, for I am one of those who think it a matter of serious concern."

Lord Kinnoull was at this time mourning the death of his brother, the Archbishop of York, which had taken place some months previously. On this subject, he speaks of the state of his mind, "which for some months has been little at ease. Be assured, however, that I bear like a Christian, what I feel as a man. To a beloved brother and friend, Nature will pay the tribute of a tear, but our faith forbids us to mourn as those who are without hope."

Mrs. Montagu wrote repeatedly of the favourable manner in which his new Essays had been received, and of her own appreciation, both of their contents and of the style in which they are written, which she considers better than that of any English author of the day. "I think it is rather insolent in a native of Aberdeen to outdo us in style. I could forgive you other excellencies, but this rather piques me."

Beattie thanked her warmly for her kind letters, but he objects to her unqualified praise of his style.

"You are pleased to say, Madam, that I write English as well as an Englishman. I cannot admit the compliment without renouncing an hypothesis of mine, which is that no Scotchman, unless he go to England very young, and remain long there, can ever attain to a perfect purity of English style. We may avoid gross improprieties and vulgar idioms, but we never reach that neatness and vivacity of expression which distinguish the English authors; and our best performances compared to theirs have always something of the stiffness and awkwardness of a man handling a sword who has not learned to fence. The reason is we are always afraid of committing some blunder. I therefore constantly recommend it to the young men whose studies I superintend, to study the English tongue in the English authors, and not in the Scotch. I consider this advice as the more requisite, because it is a common opinion in this country, especially in Edinburgh, that Dr. Robertson, Mr. Hume, and one or two more of our fashionable authors write better English than is written in England. I maintain that no man will say so who has studied that language as it is written and spoken in England, or who has acquired knowledge enough to be a critic in it."

The copies of the Essays intended for the King and Queen had been presented to them by Dr. Majendie on the Queen's birthday, and were graciously received. The King had been at once struck with the beauty of the binding, and had remarked "that he was glad they excelled so much in that way in Edinburgh." This Beattie at once reported to Creech, knowing that he would be gratified that the excellency of the work had not passed unobserved. Creech replied, "It gave me pleasure the notice that was taken of the copies delivered to their Majesties. . . . Have you seen the *London Review*? They speak like idiots on the 'Essay on Truth,'

but praise with some discernment the other Essays—particularly that on Music—highly.”

Mr. William Tytler, of Woodhouselee, writes: “The present of your valuable book gives me much pleasure, as I flatter myself, and I hope I am right, that you rank me among the number of your friends. It is a title I am fond of, and however unfashionable a man of religion may be, according to what is called the ‘*bon ton*’ at present, I shall esteem and think it to my credit to rank under the champion of Truth and Religion. . . . Your Essays on Poetry and Music give me much pleasure and entertainment. At the same time I am not thoroughly convinced that Music may not rank with Poetry and Painting, as in some degree an imitative art. I admit that by sounds you cannot describe a rural landscape, an army marching up to battle, or a people giving thanks to Heaven for a victory or any benefit. But I think Music may call up in one’s mind, by proper melody, those calm ideas that belong to a country scene, and which cannot fail to bring the picture of a landscape before you.

“Your favourite bard is in my mind. I shall give you his authority for the other two pictures:—

“ . . . Anon they move
In perfect Phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of Flutes, and soft Recorder, such as raised
To height of noblest temper, Heroes of old,
Arming to Battle . . . And
Deliberate valour breathed.”

(“Paradise Lost,” I., 549—554.)

“As to devotion,

“Their songs . . .
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.”
(IV., 687—8.)

“You will say, perhaps, that the above music, though proper to inspire deliberate courage and devotion, goes no further; but I think it does. For at the time it inspires courage and devotion; it likewise brings before you the figure of a regular resolute body of men marching up to battle, and persons in the mild, cheerful act of singing their praises to Heaven. This subject would lead me beyond the bounds of a letter, and perhaps, if business don’t prevent me, may be the subject of another.”

In many of the letters of an early date in this year, Beattie is congratulated on the promotion of his friend Dr. Porteus to the bishopric of Chester, and of the appointment he writes to Sir W. Forbes: “I know no man that better deserves to wear the mitre. . . . He is exemplary in the discharge of his duty as a clergyman, a cheerful and pleasant companion, and of the gentlest manners. He is withal an excellent scholar, a most elegant writer, and a man of business; and he and Dr. Hurd (now Bishop of Lichfield) are, I

think, the best preachers I have heard.¹ The King seems determined to promote to the Episcopal Bench such clergymen only as are most distinguished for piety and learning. Markham, now Archbishop of York, and the present Bishops of Chester and Lichfield, had not originally any other influence than what their own merit gave them. Dr. Hurd was never at Court till he went to kiss the King's hand on being nominated to the see of Lichfield."

Beattie's state of health during the winter had been such as to make him "for the first time to feel the business of his profession a labour." In spring, he had a sharp attack of fever which left him so weak that he thought himself incapable of any exertion. His friend and medical adviser, Dr. Livingstone, saw the necessity of rousing him to exertion, and finding him writing a refusal to an invitation to Cluny, begged him to say to Mr. Gordon that he would be at the Castle in a few days accompanied by Dr. Beattie, who, he thought, would be quite able to accompany him. Beattie, thus encouraged, and finding himself not only able, but the better for spending a few days with his friends, agreed to the doctor's further prescription of spending the summer in travelling, and that as much as possible on horseback.

His friend Major Mercer agreed to accompany him on his first excursion. They started in the end of May in a chaise, accompanied by a man and a horse, to allow of Beattie's riding part of the way, and when fatigued, taking refuge in the chaise. By short stages they reached Edinburgh, where they remained a week, and where Beattie took the opportunity of consulting Dr. Cullen as to his health.² From Edinburgh they came by the Spital of Glenshaee to Braemar, and from there to Dee Castle, where they joined Mrs. Beattie and her boy, and where Beattie remained for a month for the goat-whey cure. As travelling was the chief remedy his physicians recommended for him, Beattie certainly gave it a fair trial during this summer and autumn. After he left Deeside, besides some minor excursions to Peterhead and visits to his relatives, he made two long expeditions, accompanied by "Mrs. Beattie, a servant, a chaise, and a saddle-horse."

¹ In Beattie's character of Dr. Porteus, there is a whole line carefully blotted out, presumably by the Bishop himself, as Beattie's papers after his death were submitted to his inspection by Sir W. Forbes when writing Beattie's life. The line evidently spoke of the Bishop as a Christian.

² Dr. Cullen did not lead Beattie to expect a speedy or perhaps a perfect cure, and, as he thought his manner of life was more likely to affect it than medical treatment, he gave him the following quaintly worded injunctions: "Dr. Beattie must absolutely refrain from study or deep thought of any kind, if possible, especially composition, either in prose or poetry; light summer reading, cheerful conversation, where no great exertion is required, with now and then a game of cards, which are extremely proper, may do more real service than any medicines whatever." His journey on horseback he approved of, only cautioning against over-fatigue; and he concludes his prescription with directions as to using the goat-whey cure, and particular rules as to diet.

During the former of these, they explored the beauties of the Perthshire Highlands, and passed on to Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock, from which last place they were recalled to Paisley in order that Beattie might be presented with the freedom of the town.

During the latter, they went as far north as Inverness, paying a succession of visits on their way, and also on their return. At Lessendrum House, Kilravack Castle, Cullen House, and Banff, short stays were made, while nine days were spent with Mr. Baillie, of Dochfour (then living at Cradle Hall, near Inverness), and a fortnight at Gordon Castle. Of this their first visit to Gordon Castle, and the kindness with which they had been received, Mrs. Beattie wrote an account to Lady Newhaven, and says of the castle, which was at that time being greatly added to: "It is already a noble pile of buildings, and when finished will be one of the finest in the kingdom, being no less than 568 feet in length."

Alexander, Duke of Gordon, on coming of age, spent a large sum of the money that had accumulated during his long minority on the enlarging of his ancestral castle, and on the laying out of a noble park around it. In Spalding's old history, Gordon Castle is spoken of as the "Bog o' Gight," and it seems to have consisted merely of the mass of square tower which is now the centre of the great pile of buildings. It lies low, almost on the level of the Spey, which, though not within the grounds, sweeps past them, on its rapid course to the sea, at no great distance. The strength of the position of the old stronghold must have consisted in its being situated in the midst of a bog, rendering it almost inaccessible to an approaching foe; but now that defence is no longer required, the bog has become a thing of beauty. Drained, it became in Duke Alexander's time a beautiful and extensive park, of which the verdure of the sward and the magnificence of the trees were and are due to the plentiful supply of moisture still left in the soil. By his successor, Duke George, the extent of greenery was curtailed by the laying out of flower plots and erecting of fountains in the neighbourhood of the castle. On the succession of the Richmond family, a large section was taken off the extent of the park for the erection of the extensive farm steading, and for additional ground for the home farm, where so much has been done by example to improve agriculture in the district and among the tenants.

Mrs. Elizabeth Rose, of Kilravack, happened to pay her first visit to Gordon Castle while the Beatties were there on their way north, and in a letter¹ to a friend gives a graphic and interesting account of the castle, its inmates and their mode of life, from which the following extracts are taken:—

"The conversation, though it was perfectly gay and free, was

¹ Published in a volume of the Spalding Club: "A Genealogical Deduction of the Family of Rose of Kilravack."

totally remote from everything indelicate or foolish. . . . There were no cards played the first night I was there, and the second, though there was a party at Loo, the Duchess often rose from it to attend a favourite song. The table is very elegant, but I saw no disguised dishes nor French cookery, no coquetry, no jealousy, no hard drinking. . . . And amidst the magnificence that reigns, one had not cause to lament it as ill-bestowed superfluity, for by accidental hints in the Duchess's conversation I found that her heart was susceptible of much pity to the poor, that her hand was often stretched to relieve, but with a careful distinction of real objects. . . . Mrs. Rose introduced me to Mrs. Beattie and the Doctor, and I rejoiced at meeting. After tea we got fiddles in order, and the Doctor played on the violoncello, so we performed some trios very well ; and between them, he and I sang Scotch songs in two different parts, which went delightfully with the violoncello. Next forenoon everybody rode, drove, walked, or stayed in the house as they chose. Mrs. Beattie and I got the coach and drove to see her Grace's farm. Mrs. Beattie is but a weak body, not at all what you would expect to be the choice of the author of the 'Minstrel,' yet her 'he loved, and loved her from a child.'¹ I got a good deal of amusement from her conversation, however, as she had been much among the literary world while her husband was in England. . . . That evening we had music as the night before. After supper Dr. Beattie sang some of Jackson's songs, one of which he has noted for me, and it will charm you. I sang one or two songs and we had catches as the night before. Dr. Beattie's countenance seems the abode of tranquillity, and his manners are plain and mild—his voice mellow, soft and deep—his performance on the bass fiddle is much hurt by the want of the use of one of his fingers by the cut he got."

It was most disappointing to Beattie to find, on his return home in the beginning of November, that he had made little if any progress towards recovery. He wrote to his sister, Mrs. Valentine: "In obedience to the physician, I employed the whole summer in going from place to place in quest of health, but I have not found it. When I returned home two weeks ago I was as weak and as unable to walk as when you saw me. I have been obliged to employ one to take off my hands the most laborious part of the College business during the winter, for I am myself quite incapable of it. If I live till spring, I am advised, as a last effort, to go to Bath to drink the waters."

This advice Mrs. Montagu strongly advised him to follow, as she believed the society he would meet at Bath would distract his thoughts from his bodily ailments, on which she considered the

¹ The "Minstrel."

regime that his physicians had prescribed tended to fix his attention too much.¹

In April of this year, his friend Mr. Williamson sent Beattie an extract from a letter which had just been published² anonymously at Oxford. It was addressed to Adam Smith, whose life of Hume had just appeared, and expressed doubt as to Hume's being so indifferent to the effect the "Essay on Truth" had had on the popularity of his system of philosophy, as his friends were anxious should be supposed. The letter purported to be "by one of the people called Christians," but the writer was the Vice-Chancellor Dr. Horne, President of Magdalen College, who afterwards acknowledged himself as its author.³

During the course of this year, Beattie published a small edition of the "Minstrel," and a selection of his other poems—the few he thought worth preserving. Among them he inserted one of his jocular rhyming epistles, addressed to the Honourable Charles Boyd, as he explains to Mr. Gordon, Cluny, when sending him a copy of the book, "merely to show that I am not quite so sour a metaphysician as some people imagine."

¹ From one of Mrs. Montagu's letters of this year, we learn how public schools were looked on in those days. She was happy to find that her young nephew's constitution "was equal to the hardships of a public school." But to its dangers she would not trust him without a guardian, so she had engaged a young clergyman as his tutor to watch over his morals. And in a letter from Lady Newhaven we get a glimpse of the medical treatment then prevalent. For a fever of twenty-one days' continuance, "four bleedings and suitable discipline" had been the remedies used. Little wonder that she adds her recovery had been very slow!

² On April 5th.

³ The letter is to be found among his published works.

CHAPTER XIII.

DOMESTIC LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

Beattie ceases to ride, and begins to recover his health—Occupations during the Winter—Account of the change of his style of writing to Mrs. Montagu—Psalmody of the Church of Scotland—Inscriptions on public monuments—Birth of his younger son—Mrs. Montagu gives her name to the child—Character of the Earl of Erroll—Progress of Mrs. Beattie's illness—Duchess of Gordon offers to come into Aberdeen to see her—Beattie's better health and literary work—Extracts from Letters—Boes of Lochlee and Duchess of Gordon.

BEATTIE continued through the winter to suffer from extreme weakness, and yet to follow the *régime* of motion prescribed by his physicians, until, in February, he was debarred from riding by his horse becoming lame. He did not get another in its place, and from that time his health began to improve, and his strength to return. In a few weeks, he made more progress than in the previous seven months. He was so much better that all thought of going to Bath was given up; and that the more readily, as Mrs. Beattie's state of health was such as to cause him much uneasiness. She had been confined to her room for weeks, and could not have accompanied him, nor could he well have left her.

The winter, however, had not been spent in idleness. He had continued to lecture to his class, and for the guidance of the assistant whom he had engaged to fulfil his other class-duties he wrote out more fully the notes he had found sufficient for his own use.

In the early part of the winter, he was also engaged in correcting his new *Essays* for a second edition, which was printed in London by Mr. Strahan. Mr. Strahan was also to print a volume containing all the poems of which Beattie was willing to be considered the author, "renouncing all others as juvenile and incorrect." This he was led to do from having seen in print some poems ascribed to him which he had never written, and some of his own inaccurately copied. The copyright of these poems he was to give to Dilly and Creech, in return for favours he had received from them. In this collection, Beattie, in addition to those poems he had allowed Mr. Creech to publish the previous year, inserted the Ode to Hope and the Epitaph on the Honourable Mrs. Gregory).

But, before this selection of poems was sent to the press, Beattie desired Mr. Dilly to submit it to Mrs. Montagu's criticism, and to beg her to suppress any one of the poems she considered would bring him no credit. Dilly sent Mrs. Montagu not only Beattie's selection,

but also a complete collection of his early poems, published some twelve years previously. This annoyed him very much. He blushed to think she should have seen what he had flattered himself "had long ago fallen into that oblivion which it deserves."

"The glare of images, the tawdry style, the overcharged harmony, to say nothing of its other faults, are to me the objects of very great disgust. You may naturally ask," he proceeds to say, "how I came to publish what I think so meanly of. The truth is that my notions of good writing have undergone a considerable change within these twelve years. We who pass all our early years in Scotland, are obliged to study English as a dead language, and without the assistance of a master. Hence, in our first attempts to write it, we are very apt to imitate bad models. My admiration of Thomson's poetry and sentiments, and the intoxication produced by the melancholy strains of Young, made me admire, also, the style and the composition of those authors, which you know, Madam, are very unclassical, at least, in the 'Seasons' and the 'Night Thoughts.' This, I believe, will in part account for some of the miscarriages of my youth. Besides, in Scotland we are very inattentive to the Greek and Latin classics, and when I was a scholar we were still more inattentive to the art of criticism. It is true I had as much Greek and Latin then as other people of my standing; but all the while I was at school and college I never received one single advice on the subject of composition, except in the matter of syntax alone; and though I heard every day that Homer and Virgil and the rest of them were excellent authors, there was no reason assigned for that assertion; so that in forming my judgment of the classics, I had nothing to trust to but my own feelings and some critical remarks which I met with occasionally in books. When I had gotten a little more skill in the English tongue, and had grown more *intimately* acquainted with the most elegant classic authors, my ideas of composition became different. I did not apprehend a poetical image with more vivacity, nor feel a just or pathetic sentiment with more energy; but in perspicuity and simplicity in the arrangements of parts, and in their subserviency to one determinate purpose, I began to discover charms which I had never attended to before. All this I have endeavoured to express in one of the stanzas of the 'Minstrel,' which, to save you the trouble of turning to the book, I shall here transcribe, after asking pardon for quoting my own works:—

"Of late, with cumbersome though pompous show,
Edwin would oft his flowery rhyme deface,
Through ardour to adorn; but Nature now
To his experienced eye a modest grace
Presents, where ornament the second place
Holds, to intrinsic worth and just design,
Subservient still. Simplicity apace
Tempers his rage: he owns her charm divine,
And clears th' ambiguous phrase and lops the unwieldy line."

Mrs. Montagu replied :—

" . . . You are a very severe critic to your own poems. Even the most faulty have many beauties. Those consigned to Mr. Dilly for publication are all very beautiful. There are some fine things in the 'Judgment of Paris,' and at some leisure time, if you will strip your goddesses of their false ornaments, and let them appear in their naked charms as they did to the Phrygian boy, the world will adjudge the prize as he did."

Another subject which at this time occupied Beattie's thoughts and employed his pen, was the Psalmody of the Church of Scotland. Two or three years previously, a committee for its improvement had been appointed by the General Assembly, and the secretary of this committee had written to ask Beattie if he had any poetical paraphrases of Scripture lying by him which would be suitable for the purpose, and, if so, if he would send them to the committee. Beattie could not give them the assistance they asked for ; but, in writing to his young friend, Mr. Cameron, who was interested in the subject of the application that had been made to him, he mentioned that he had long had a scheme in his head for improving the metrical psalms used in the Church of Scotland, by making a compilation of all the best passages of the best versions.

In the course of a conversation Mr. Cameron had with Dr. Blair on the subject, he mentioned this suggestion of Beattie's. Mr. Blair caught at the idea of improving the metrical version of the Psalms themselves, as he had almost despaired of getting proper material for an *addition* to the Psalmody, so few of the paraphrases sent to the committee having been suitable for adoption. He asked Cameron to write to Beattie that he highly approved of his suggestion, and that he earnestly begged he would undertake the work himself, as he was firmly persuaded no other could do it so well, and Beattie would thereby do a very essential service to the Church. The state of his health made it impossible for Beattie to comply with this request, but he promised to give all the assistance in his power by fully explaining, in a letter to Dr. Blair, his plan and his ideas as to how the service of praise in the Scottish Church might be improved.¹

¹ This letter he afterwards printed for private circulation. It formed a pamphlet of about thirty pages. In the *Scots Magazine* for August, 1892, the pamphlet is mentioned in an article entitled "This Picture and That." The following are some of the remarks upon it, written, we believe, by the Rev. W. W. Tulloch, D.D., at that time editor of the magazine. "A very tattered copy of this interesting tract has just come into the writer's hands, and reading it in this year of grace 1892 it comes upon one with great force and impressiveness as the work of a man who lived before his time, and above his age." The writer of the article has described the author of the tract as the "well-known Aberdeenshire divine, the Rev. Dr. Beattie." The mistake of calling Beattie "a divine" was corrected by two correspondents in the following

About this time, Beattie was applied to, through Mr. Arbuthnot, by Mr. Craig, a nephew of the poet Thomson, to give his advice as to the inscription to be put on a monument to his uncle's memory, which Mr. Craig intended to erect at the village of Ednam, the birthplace of the poet. In Beattie's reply to Mr. Arbuthnot, he gives his opinion as to the composition of all such inscriptions on public monuments. He considers that, as they are meant to catch the eye of the traveller and give him information in regard to the object that draws his attention, and not to show the wit of the composer, they should be perfectly simple and true and as concise as the subject and language will permit; and, for the same reasons, that English and not Latin should be the language employed. At the same time, he sent an inscription which he thought suitable for Mr. Craig's purpose.

On the 8th of July, Beattie's second son was born, ten years after the birth of his only other child, James Hay.

Early in her acquaintance with Beattie, Mrs. Montagu had exacted from him a promise that his next child should be named by her, and, on giving this infant the name of Montagu, she assumed towards him the title and duties of a godmother, though those are unknown in the Church of Scotland. But what she assumed she faithfully performed towards this boy, in whose short career she took a deep interest.

When writing to Mrs. Montagu at this time, Beattie mentions the death of his early patron and friend, Lord Erroll, which had taken

number of the magazine. The promise of this letter did not satisfy Dr. Blair: he again wrote, combating all Beattie's objections to undertaking the work, and respectfully pressing it upon him. Thus urged, Beattie, though feeling unfit for the task as a whole, thought he might give a specimen of the style he considered befitting the work. This, he held, should combine perspicuity, simplicity, and conciseness with harmony of expression, so that it should be intelligible to the meanest capacity, yet pleasing to all, and should in some measure give the version a resemblance to the majesty of the original. He began with the first two psalms, and sent copies of his new versification to his friends for their criticism. Some were much pleased with his work, but the judges he relied on most were dissatisfied, and he gave up the attempt.

An anecdote of his boy, which he relates to Mrs. Montagu when sending a copy of his two psalms for her inspection, shows how united in work and taste the father and son already were.

"There is another little manuscript enclosed in this letter, of which I beg leave to give you the history. My son, whose age is nine years and nine months, and who received his first lesson in Latin about nine months ago, is the author of it. Having seen the two psalms which I versified (for he is very fond of poetry), he took it into his head to translate the first psalm into Latin from the prose; and without giving notice of his design to any person, and having no other help but his dictionary, produced the enclosed, which I send you as he wrote it, with all its faults, and in his careless, running hand. Notwithstanding its faults, it seemed to me to be rather an extraordinary performance, considering the age and standing of the writer, and I was so well pleased that I made him a present of a Latin Bible. I ask pardon for this gossiping, to which I am not much addicted, but I know it will give you pleasure to see that the boy is advancing so well in his learning."

place in the beginning of June, and thus describes his character and personal appearance. "Lord Erroll's death, of which you must have heard, is a great loss to this country and matter of unspeakable regret to his friends. I owed him much; but independently of all considerations of gratitude, I had a sincere liking and very great esteem for him. In his manners he was wonderfully agreeable; a most affectionate and attentive parent, husband, and brother; elegant in his economy and perhaps expensive, yet exact and methodical. He exerted his influence as a man of rank and a magistrate in doing good to all the neighbourhood; and it has often been mentioned to his honour that no man ever administered an oath with a more pious and commanding solemnity than he; he was regular in his attendance upon public worship, and exemplary in the performance of it. In a word, he was adored by his servants, a blessing to his tenants, and the darling of the whole country. He died in the fifty-second year of his age. His stature was six feet and four inches, and his proportions most exact, but inclining to the gigantic. His countenance and deportment exhibited such a mixture of the sublime and the graceful that he often put me in the mind of an ancient hero, and I remember Dr. Samuel Johnson was quite positive that he resembled Serpedon."

After the birth of her child, Mrs. Beattie's recovery for a time progressed very favourably, but this did not last long. For months relapse after relapse followed, until she became a complete invalid, and as her bodily strength failed her mental malady increased.

During this time, Beattie passed through many alternations of hope and fear. The Duchess of Gordon had urged that, as soon as Mrs. Beattie was able, she should be brought to Gordon Castle to perfect her recovery, but a short trial journey undertaken in October proved she was quite unfit for travelling. None of the Duchess's letters of this date are preserved; but, from a letter of Beattie, written to her on the 13th of December, he fears alarming reports of his wife's state both of mind and of body must have reached her, and she, with great kindness, offered to come to Aberdeen to see Mrs. Beattie, with the hope of being able to do her good. Beattie was much touched by this kindness, and grateful for the interest the Duchess took in his wife; but he assures her that what she had been told with regard to Mrs. Beattie's mind was not well founded. Although occasionally her spirits were depressed, which, considering her long confinement, was not to be wondered at, yet her mind was as composed and at times as cheerful as ever. He supposes that the reports she had heard arose from Mrs. Beattie's having often had to decline seeing friends, owing to her weakness.

Thus Beattie endeavoured to hide not only from his friends, but, as he afterwards acknowledged, from himself, the knowledge

of his wife's mental derangement, which was constantly increasing, but of which there had been indications that caused him much sorrow and much personal annoyance since 1770, only three years after his marriage. That there must have been times when Mrs. Beattie's mind was in so tranquil a frame as to give her husband hopes that with returning strength of body sanity would also be restored, her own letter of thanks to the Duchess for her kind offer shows. It is written in a touching spirit of gratitude to her and of love to her husband, and, as the last glimpse we get of her as a sane person, leaves with us a pleasant impression of what her real character was.

Although in addition to anxieties on his wife's account, he had also many about his young child, Beattie did not altogether throw aside his literary labours. In the end of the year, he wrote to Sir William Forbes, during this long confinement to home, that he had—

“Often been forced to have recourse to my pen and ink in order to forget my anxiety for a few minutes. But though I could transcribe, and correct a little, I was in a very bad state for composition. However, since March last I have written in a fair hand about three hundred and seventy pages. In this collection there are (besides other matters) three essays, on Memory, on Imagination and on Dreaming, on which I set some value. I shall read them to my class very soon; they will make about ten lectures of an hour each. In treating of Memory and Imagination, I have endeavoured not only to ascertain their phenomena and laws, but also to propose rules for improving the former faculty and for regulating the latter. The view I have taken of dreaming is new as far as I know. I have attempted to trace up some of the appearances of that mysterious mode of perception to their proximate causes, and to prove that it is in many respects useful to the human constitution. On all subjects of this nature I have constantly received more information from my own experience than from books.

“One of the next faculties that come in my way is Conscience, or the Moral Faculty, on which I have in writing a great number of unfinished observations. If I live to finish what I intend on this subject I shall probably attempt a confutation of several erroneous principles that have been adopted by modern writers on morals, but without naming any names; and it is not unlikely that I may interweave the substance of what I wrote long ago at greater length, on the Unchangeableness of Moral Truth. But winter will be over before I seriously set about it; and perhaps the state of my health may oblige me to drop the scheme altogether. However, I do not repent what I have hitherto done in transcribing and correcting my lectures, for I have been careful to make it an amusement rather

than a task ; whence I have reason to think that my health has not been injured by it."

On the contrary, this moderate work and those anxieties which had diverted his thoughts from his own ailments had done more to restore his health than all the care and attention he had bestowed on it the previous summer ; and when the time came for resuming his college duties he was able to undertake them without an assistant.

From the correspondence of this year the following are a few extracts.

Beattie thanks the Duchess of Gordon for the generous kindness she had shown to Ross of Lochlee, the author of the "Fortunate Shepherdess," whom he had brought to her notice. His visit to Gordon Castle, Beattie writes, "will furnish the old man with matter of talk and triumph for the remainder of his life."¹

Mr. Arbuthnot writes : "When Baron Gordon returned from London he brought me a piece of music composed for your 'Hermit' by Giardini. It is reckoned very pretty and expressive."

Dr. Leslie, Archdeacon and Vicar-General of the diocese of Raffoe, Ireland, was desirous of sending two of his sons to be educated at Marischal College. The reason he gave for sending them to "so remote a place" was that he was "afraid to venture them in so disorderly and dissipated a university as that of Dublin," and hearing of the good discipline and eminent teachers of Aberdeen he had determined to entrust them to the care of Dr. Beattie, "who possessed a high place in my esteem before my present project was formed." Beattie must have replied so as to encourage Dr. Leslie gratefully to entrust the superintendence of his sons, as to their education, money matters, and mode of life, entirely to him.

Beattie thanks Lord Hailes for some of his minor publications, of which he had sent him copies, and in return sends him his pamphlet on the "Psalmody of the Church of Scotland" and the new edition of his poems. In reply, Lord Hailes, after making some remark on the selection that Beattie had made of his poems, falls foul of

¹ There is an entry in Beattie's account book, of date April 12th, 1780, from which we learn, that for the second edition of Ross's Scotch Poems he supplied the paper and Mr. Chalmers the printing, trusting to be repaid by the sale of the book. Beattie adds as a note to this entry : "Ross got fifteen guineas from the Duchess of Gordon, on presenting her Grace with a copy. It was I who planned the edition and procured the Duchess's consent that it should be dedicated to her. I also corrected the press and the poem too in many places. My view in this was to get a little money for the author, whom besides his own merit I esteem because he was a particular acquaintance of my father's, and has told me several things of him which I never heard from anybody else."

² His eldest son had just returned from passing through the university course there, and had given his father such an account of the discipline of the place that "it appears almost a miracle that any young person should be able to escape from its pollutions."

his "Ode on Lord Hay's Birthday," by which his historical accuracy is offended. "No poetical merit can ever in my eyes justify a poem that alludes to the Hays at Luncarty—it is the fable of fables. The name is not *Hay* but *de Hays* or *de la Hays*; a Norman family; the three red shields have no connection with any implement of husbandry; the ancient crest was not, as now, a *hawk*, referring to the tale in *Beowulf*, but a *Deer's* head. Since I saw you I have had the most convincing proof of this, by inspection of the seal of Gilbert de la Hays, Constable, in the reign of Bruce."

After acknowledging his obligations to Principal Campbell and Beattie for correcting a book that he was then writing, Lord Hailes continues: "I have a fancy of publishing an edition of the 'Parerga' of Dr. Arthur Johnson. Notes will be necessary, and as the scene lies in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen, I flatter myself that the men of learning and observation in that quarter will give their assistance. This is not a serious work but an occasional amusement. If I had an encouragement to undertake this at the first leisure hour, I would run the risk of the expense of printing and give the profits to the Infirmary at Aberdeen. . . . You need not be told that in this I have an eye to the study of Latin; unless something is done it will be in every sense a dead language before this generation passes away, and a little smattering of French literature, under the nonsensical title of 'Belles Lettres,' will be the law and gospel to the next age.

"It has occurred in the course of Providence that most of the infallible teachers of our time have been removed from the earth in the space of a few months. The friends of Religion and Literature ought to take advantage of the stage being clear; they ought to begin with pointing out the great ignorance and blunders of Voltaire and his followers; not in long books but in slight legible publications."

Beattie replied: "The death of so many infidel writers does no doubt furnish a fair opportunity to the friends of Religion to review their performances and expose their blunders. But while it continues to be the fashion all over Europe to read and admire Voltaire, and while some even of our clergy themselves extol not only his wit but his learning, and (what is more strange) his candour, it is to be feared that the person who should write against him would not anywhere obtain a hearing. Mr. Hume being in Philosophy but a heavy writer, it was not so difficult to contend with him; the prejudices in his favour were owing rather to his personal merit than to the clearness of his ideas, the solidity of his acquirements, or the vivacity of his style. But the admirers of Voltaire will not easily be brought to reason, for they cannot give up an argument without losing a joke."

With regard to the battle of Luncarty, he says he had never had reason to doubt the truth of what had been recorded of it, until the publication of the *Annals of Scotland*: he had often talked of it both with the late Lord Erroll and with Lord Kinnoull, "who both said that it had always been believed in the family."

Mr. Scott, of Amwell, writes, begging Beattie's opinion of some Eclogues he had sent for criticism, as he is anxious to publish them immediately. The letter is endorsed in Beattie's handwriting, "Answered."

There are two letters from an artist signing himself "Joshua Wright, painter in Derby, Derbyshire," informing Beattie that, having read the "Minstrel" and admired the poem much, he was engaged in painting a picture of Edwin, and would be glad of Beattie's advice as to various adjuncts he proposed to introduce before finishing the work. He hopes to exhibit the picture in the Royal Academy, and, if a print be made of it, he is to send Beattie a copy¹ as a token of gratitude.

Along with a letter to Mr. Lundie, minister of Lonmay, whom Beattie had been assisting to find a schoolmaster, Beattie has sent a *jeu d'esprit* in the form of a letter so ingeniously misspelt that it is very difficult to discover its import. The spelling is phonetic, but not of one word, but of several run together as in rapid speech.

The following are extracts from a letter of an old student of Beattie's, Mr. Alexander Peters, who had gone to Glasgow, where he had a pupil, and at the same time attended some of the classes at the university :—

"The plan of teaching at this College is somewhat different from yours at Aberdeen. The first year, Greek and Latin are taught; the second year, Logic, Greek and Latin; the third year, Mathematics and Moral Philosophy; the fourth year, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. Each Professor has a public and a private class. In consequence of a Royal visitation in the year 1721, the Professors are restricted to a certain plan of teaching. The Logic Professor is required to lecture *de ente in genere*, and on that part of Pneumatology which treats *de mente humana*. The Professor of Moral Philosophy is to teach Ethics and that part of Pneumatology which treats *de Deo*. The gentlemen, however, take the liberty of deviating from this plan as they see occasion. Accordingly, Mr. Jardine first explains the powers of the human mind; second, the proper means of improving these; third, taste and criticism, the origin of language, etc. Dr. Reid first treats of the powers of the understanding and will; second, of Natural Theology; and third, of Ethics; so that the Logic and Moral Philosophy classes do in some measure interfere with one another. In the former, too, Hutcheson's Compendium is

¹ It is in the possession of his relatives.

used, which contains a great deal of the Scholastic Jargon. I have been several times in Dr. Reid's class; his lectures are extremely sensible and perspicuous; but his language is unmusical, and his manner ungainly. I forgot to mention that the Natural and Moral Philosophy Classes being entirely on an equal footing, the students are at liberty to enter either the one or the other first, as they choose; though the order I mentioned before is generally observed. I attend Mr. Anderson's Experimental Class; his apparatus is truly elegant. I likewise sometimes attend the Divinity Hall. Dr. Wight is by no means a despicable lecturer. The first division of his course is on the existence and attributes of Deity; he has been combating the principles of David Hume, and I can easily see avails himself of a certain *well-known Essay*. The Doctor, poor man, is much distressed with the gout; he is wholly deprived of the use of his legs, and must be conveyed into the Hall in a chair, before the students meet.

"There are a good many literary societies in the town. The Professors have a meeting of that kind every Friday night, when they deliver discourses, each in his turn, on some topic of his own choosing, intimated under a penalty eight days before to all the members. The speech being made, each gives his opinion, and debates are sometimes carried on with considerable warmth. The last point was, 'Whether the repeal of the penal laws respecting Popery would be attended with good or bad consequences to the kingdom in general?' Dr. Reid maintained mildly, that the repeal would be attended with no bad consequences; Mr. Anderson, etc., that it would. The Natural Philosopher compared the Papists to a rattle-snake, harmless when kept under proper restraint, but dangerous like it when at full liberty, and ready to diffuse a baleful poison around. The clergy here are preaching against *The Man of Sin*, with all the ardour of enthusiasm; and Thursday next is appointed for a Public fast by this Synod, principally on the apprehended growth of Popery. The Professors and students hear sermon on Sundays in a chapel of their own, having left the College Church some years ago. The preachers in the chapel are generally private tutors about the town and college, appointed by the faculty. There is no fixed preacher—last Sabbath I had the honour of officiating myself, which I did with a considerable degree of perturbation. The number of students is about four hundred, though there are not nearly so many this year as usual."

In two of Beattie's letters to the Duchess of Gordon in the end of this year, he speaks of Sir W. Forbes's desire to buy back his family's property of Monymusk, and of there being a hope that the proprietor might part with it, as Lady Grant wished to leave the north and settle in the south. Beattie fears, however, that Sir William will soon inherit (through his paternal grandmother) the estate of

Pitaligo as the proprietor is in declining health. This fear was soon justified, and the thought of buying Monymusk was given up.

There are other letters, which, though uninteresting to the public, served to show that intercourse with people of higher note in the world had made no difference in Beattie's affectionate and kindly feeling towards older and humbler associates.

1779.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANXIETIES.

Mrs. Beattie's increasing illness—Beattie's employments—Archery—Rubislaw Den—Miss Valentine's visit—Mrs. Beattie able to be taken to Peterhead—Benefit derived from change temporary—Beattie's own health fails—Obliged to have an Assistant for his College work—Fears his Children may soon be orphans—Subjects of Beattie's Letters published by Sir W. Forbes—Garriek's death—Scotticisms—Effect on his nervous system caused by Writing "Essay on Truth"—Lord Monboddo, etc., etc.—Extracts from unpublished letters—Prospect of West India planters—Views of the different parties in the Church of Scotland on the expected Bill for the Relief of Roman Catholics—Duchess of Gordon offers Beattie a copy of her portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds—The *Mirror*—Edward Dilly's death—Design by Angelica Kauffman—Engraving by Bartolozzi for a frontispiece to a New Edition of Beattie's Essays, etc., etc.

DURING the course of this year, Mrs. Beattie's health became worse. In letters to his friends, her husband gives full particulars of her bodily suffering, but still jealously guards the secret of her mental malady, which must have been more and more apparent to himself, and, before the end of the year, could scarcely have been concealed from the public. Indeed, seemingly aware that already it had been impossible entirely to escape observation, he is careful in every letter to state that her spirits are surprisingly good, though she has times of depression, when she fears she may not recover.

To a man of Beattie's sensitive nature, the watching over his wife in this melancholy state must have been peculiarly trying, and his own times of depression must have been frequent. How he combated them he relates to Mrs. Montagu:—

"As I must be constantly at home, and have therefore been obliged in a manner to shut myself up from society, I find it very difficult to keep my spirits in tolerable order; sometimes I find it impossible. But I endeavour to comfort myself with this principle, which, while I retain my reason, I will never part with—that every dispensation of Providence is beneficent and wise, and that if my present affliction do not terminate in my good, either here or hereafter, it is altogether my own fault. My mind is too restless to allow me to read. Yet sometimes I amuse myself with explaining Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' to my son. I am just going to enter on a course of Shakespeare, to whom I have been almost a stranger these ten years. If I may judge by the power he formerly had over me, I think I may flatter myself with the hope that he will not only fix

my attention, but also amuse and improve me. My chief employment is to correct and write out, in a fair hand, some of those many essays on moral and philosophical subjects, which I sketched out many years ago, for the benefit of those whom I superintended in my professional capacity. This employs my mind without fatiguing it. Deep study would destroy me ; and idleness, to which I have never been accustomed, would have the same effect. Though I write without any immediate view to publish, yet I finish with as much care as if I were just going to press ; and I endeavour to give every subject that plainness of style and illustration, and that moral and amusing turn of sentiment, which the public have been pleased to approve of in the things I have printed."

As out of door exercise was necessary for his health, Beattie had recourse to archery, which he could practice in his own garden, within call of his wife's sickroom. Several letters on this subject passed between him and his friend the Rev. Mr. Laing of Peterhead, whom he initiated into the use of the bow, and directed how to make arrows for himself ; on this point passing on to him hints, which he had got from Professor Copland, as to feathering the arrow so as to give it a rotatory motion in its flight. When he left the precincts of his own garden, his walks seem to have been often directed to Rubislaw Den, which Sir William Forbes describes as "a romantic wooded spot in the near neighbourhood of Aberdeen, to which Dr. Beattie delighted to retire in order to indulge in silent meditation." It is now included in the city boundary, and it is to be hoped some effort will be made to preserve some trace of its romantic beauty, as an ornament to the town. Beattie thus describes it to the Duchess of Gordon in June of this year : "I have made several visits of late to the Den of Rubislaw, and find a charm in it which I was never sensible of before. One evening it appeared in dreadful majesty, for it was so thick a fog that I could hardly see the tops of the trees or even the cliffs ; and so I was at liberty to fancy them as high and as wild as I pleased."

During the winter and spring of this year, Miss Valentine, the only daughter of Beattie's oldest and favourite sister, paid her uncle and Mrs. Beattie a long visit. She was then but a young girl, but she so enlivened and brightened their sad home that her uncle wrote of her to her mother : "She is of so much use to us, and so agreeable to us all, that I know not whether we shall ever be able to part with her." This was the first of many long visits, ending at last in her uncle's house becoming her permanent home, and him and his the objects of her care, until she saw them all laid in the grave.

As soon as the weather permitted, Beattie was anxious to try the effects of change of air and scene on his wife ; and the Duchess of Gordon urged their spending the time of the goat-whey cure with

her at Glenfiddich; but it was not till the end of August that Mrs. Beattie gained sufficient strength to leave home. Then the family went for a few weeks to Peterhead; and, as Mrs. Beattie was now incapable of managing her household, and indeed required supervision herself, her mother accompanied them.

Mrs. Dun was an elderly woman, and, as the care of a young child in addition to her daughter, would have been too much for her, Montagu was left at the Manse of Durris, on Deeside, in charge of the clergyman and his wife, old and intimate friends of his grandparents. There he passed much of his bright and happy childhood, undimmed by the sadness of his own home, which clouded the boyhood of his elder brother, and must have greatly increased, if it did not cause, his great reserve and shyness when with strangers.

The slight benefit that Mrs. Beattie derived from her stay in Peterhead did not last long. During the winter, she became "worse than ever." Beattie himself had a bad attack of rheumatism, followed by fever; and he was obliged to have an assistant in his college work.

From the state of his own and his wife's health, he was much concerned about the future of his children; who, he could not but fear, might soon be orphans, and in writing to Mrs. Montagu of the good progress his elder son was making at school, he adds: "His heart and his constitution are rather too tender, which I regret the more because I fear he has some severe trials before him, and those too at no great distance. But if that should happen which I apprehend, Providence, I trust, will be the protector of the fatherless; and may I not presume that those persons will befriend the orphan children who have with such unexampled generosity patronised the parents? I hope I shall be in a condition to leave what may prevent their being burdensome to anybody, and what, with strict economy, may afford them in this country the means of such an education as I myself received. But the countenance of friends will be necessary to help them forward in the world, and that I trust will not be wanting so long as they prove themselves not unworthy of it."

The year closed with these gloomy forebodings, cheered, however, by another pressing invitation from the Duchess of Gordon, this time to join the Christmas party at Gordon Castle—an invitation which, though not accepted, yet did him good, Beattie said, "at a time when he had much need of it."

From Beattie's correspondence during this year, Sir William Forbes gives a large selection, sixteen letters in all. Two of these came from Mrs. Montagu, the rest from Beattie, chiefly to the Duchess of Gordon, Mrs. Montagu, and Sir William himself. The subjects of these letters, amongst a variety of other topics, include remarks on Lowth's "Isaiah," on Hume's posthumous work, Potter's

Æschylus," the character of *Cæsar*, an account of how Purcel was led to introduce the Scotch air "Up in the Morning Early," called in England "Cold and Raw," as the basis of one of his songs composed for the Queen's birthday, etc., etc.

Garrick's death, which took place on the 20th of January of this year, calls forth the following eulogium from Dr. Beattie, in a letter to the Duchess of Gordon:—

"My friends in England are all in tears for poor Garrick. In his own sphere he was certainly the greatest man of his time, and since I knew him I have always thought that in private company his talents were not less admirable than upon the stage. There was a playfulness in his humour and a solidity in his judgment which made him at once a most delightful and most instructive associate. After passing part of two days with him at his house at Hampton, I once intended to address to him a copy of verses, in which I had actually made some progress; but something interposed to prevent me. The thought, I remember, was to this purpose; that in him the soul of Shakespeare had revived after undergoing in the other world a purification of one hundred years, for that was the exact space of time between the death of Shakespeare and the birth of Garrick. Kindred spirits they certainly were. Shakespeare was never thoroughly understood till Garrick explained him. Both were equally great in tragedy and in comedy; and yet for comedy both had evidently a predilection."

Of his little pamphlet containing a list of *Scotticisms*, printed in March of this year, chiefly for the use of his students, Beattie writes to Sir William Forbes; and in another letter to him, speaking of some composition he was engaged in, he reveals to his friend something of the effect on his nervous system caused by his writing the "Essay on Truth," and his sufferings in consequence. The passage is as follows: "How much my mind has been injured by certain speculations you will partly guess when I tell you a fact that is now unknown to all the world—that since the 'Essay on Truth' was printed in quarto in the summer of 1776, I have never *dared* to read it over. I durst not even read the sheets to see whether there were any errors in the print, and was obliged to get a friend to do that office for me. Not that I am in the least dissatisfied with the sentiments—every word of my own doctrine I do seriously believe; nor have I ever seen any objections to it which I could not easily answer. But the habit of anticipating and obviating arguments upon an abstruse and interesting subject, came in time to have dreadful effects upon my nervous system; and I cannot read what I then wrote without some degree of horror, because it recalls to my mind the horrors that I have sometimes felt after passing a long evening in those severe studies. You will perhaps understand me better when I have told you a short story: One who was on board the *Centurion* in Lord Anson's voyage, having got some money in

that expedition, purchased a small estate about three miles from this town. I have had several conversations with him on the subject of the voyage, and once asked him whether he had ever read the history of it. He told me he had read all the history except the description of their sufferings during the run from Cape Horn to Juan Fernandez, which he said were so great that he durst not recollect nor think of them."

There is a long letter to the Duchess of Gordon, giving an account of a visit he had had from an old schoolfellow of whom he had scarcely heard for twenty years. As an older boy this friend had taken a great liking to Beattie, and had been the first to put a violin in his hand, and the only person from whom he had received any lessons in music. When Beattie went to college, his friend went to farming, in which he had not proved successful; and he had come to Aberdeen to put Beattie in mind of their old acquaintance, and to see if he could do anything for him. Finding that the height of his ambition was to be a tide-waiter or an officer of excise, Beattie applied to the Duchess begging her to use her influence to procure some such situation for him.

Sir William Forbes says, "Beattie's endeavour to serve his old friend, I believe, proved unsuccessful"; but, though he may have been unsuccessful in obtaining help from others, he gave substantial aid himself. He found that his friend had a son of an age to learn a trade, and he not only paid his apprentice fee, but supplied him with necessary clothes and tools. For the money thus expended he accepted a bill from the father, but notes with regard to it, "but as he is not able to pay it, and as I was under obligation to him in my younger days, it is not my intention to claim it unless his circumstances be altered considerably for the better." It never was paid, except by gratitude. Some time after this, his friend brought Beattie the present of a fiddle of his own making (he was an ingenious mechanic) as acknowledgment of his kindness; but for this, Beattie, knowing that he was in need of the money, prevailed on him to accept a price.

In the end of the year, Beattie writes to Dr. Porteus of his finishing a Grammatical Treatise in two parts, a good deal of the information for which he had drawn from Lord Monboddo on Language. This leads him to speak of Lord Monboddo's very peculiar ideas on some subjects, but also to give him a high character as a man.

From the unpublished correspondence, the following are extracts:—

In January, Mr. Baillie, of Dochfour, whom Beattie had visited at Cradlehall, near Inverness, and who was a West Indian proprietor, writes: "It is melancholy to observe that the appearance of public affairs is rather worse than when we talked last on that subject, though it was then bad enough. For my own part, I despair of seeing things take a more favourable turn, for there is not a sign of

wisdom nor vigour in the measures pursued. I dread the accounts that we have reason to expect from the West Indies, and have all the winter been endeavouring to reconcile it to my own mind, the being a subject of France; and as we of Grenada have reason to expect as favourable a capitulation as the island of Dominica got, I have determined on going over on the first news of the islands' being taken, and by living as a quiet and inoffensive subject, I have no doubt of being able to make such remittances to my family as will enable them to live comfortably till there is a peace, when, if I live, I shall return to them. These, as far as I can learn, are the determinations of many hundreds circumstanced as I am, and you will allow, the present prospect of things seems to promise that they will soon have to put them in execution. If, contrary to expectation, we should still remain a part of the British Empire, we have little reason to thank our administration, which has left us for so many months at the mercy of any invader."

Of the expected bill for the relief of Roman Catholics from civil and ecclesiastical disabilities, and of the way it was viewed by the different parties in the Church of Scotland, Beattie writes to Lady Newhaven, January 13th: "A certain party among us have been very clamorous of late against the expected bill for the relief of Roman Catholics; but I am confident that the greater part of the kingdom are of more tolerant principles. The General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland is always divided into two parties; one is called the Moderate, the other (with what reason I shall not say) the more Orthodox. The latter have a particular aversion to patronage where church livings are concerned, and would have the people of every parish to choose their own pastor; the Moderate party are satisfied with the determination of the legislature in regard to this matter. It has been observed that the Orthodox, or (as their antagonists call them) the *wild party*, have manifested on this occasion a very warm zeal against the Papists, and in behalf of what they call the *Protestant interest*. And what is strange, the same party, or at least a considerable number among them, are suspected (and some of them with reason) to be favourers of the American Rebellion. . . ."

And, on the same subject, he writes to Sir William Forbes, June 12th: "I am quite out of temper with our General Assembly and almost the whole of the Scotch ministers. Dr. Campbell is the only man among them who has had the courage to speak the words of Christianity, which are always the words of truth and soberness. You must have seen his excellent pamphlet. As matters now stand there is a grievous stigma upon the name of Presbyterian, but I hope a new Assembly may wipe it off, as nothing is more unsteady than the resolution of a popular meeting. If Swift were alive now, he would triumph in his graceless ribaldry; 'Ay,' he

would say, 'I always knew that Peter and Jack were the same at bottom.'"

In a letter to the Duchess of Gordon, Beattie thanks her warmly for having offered him a copy of her picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It was to have been painted by a Mr. Wells, but seems never to have been done, as it was not till 1782 that Beattie got a miniature of her Grace, in part copied from Sir Joshua's picture, but for the finishing of which she gave the artist, a Mr. Smith, two sittings.¹ In another letter to the Duchess, among other subjects he mentions the *Mirror*, a paper in the style of the *Spectator*, which had just appeared in Edinburgh. "As your Grace appeared to receive some amusement from the *Mirrors*, I have sent the remainder, down to the present date. They come to me by the post from Edinburgh, but I know not who sends them, and I am equally ignorant of the author or authors.² Edinburgh is too small a place for a work of this kind. There is not a sufficiency either of materials or of purchasers. Some of these papers are not amiss, but most of the topics have been preoccupied by the *Spectator*, *Guardian*, *World*, etc.; nor is there such force of thinking nor such elegance of style as can make up for the want of variety or originality. But perhaps I am not so easily pleased at present as I should be at another time, for I have been of late very much engrossed by the prose writings of Addison, which I admire the more both in style and in matter the longer I read them."

There are two letters from Charles Dilly. In the first, he intimates the death of his brother Edward, who by his will had desired mourning rings to be presented to a small number of his friends as a token of his respect. Beattie was one of those whom he particularly mentioned, and the ring was enclosed in the letter.

Edward Dilly had before his death printed a very large edition of Beattie's *Essays*, and, in order to promote its sale, Charles Dilly proposed to prefix a frontispiece. Beattie "let him take his own way, though I am not fond of putting pictures in my books." The second letter he had from Dilly in the end of this year was to inform him that the design chosen for the picture was a figure of Socrates in the act of composing a hymn in honour of Apollo, in

¹ Dr. Beattie's relatives possess this miniature.

² The authors were a set of gentlemen in Edinburgh chiefly connected with the Bar, who, from meeting frequently and discussing such subjects as the manners, tastes, and literature of the day, began to write essays on these topics for their own entertainment, and finished by throwing them into the form of a periodical paper, which they gave to the public. Mr. Henry Mackenzie (author of the "*Man of Feeling*") was their medium of communication with the publisher, and also the contributor of not a few of the papers. Three of the original members of the association afterwards became Lords of Session, and among other occasional contributors were Lord Hailes, Mr. Baron Gordon, Lord Woodhouselee, and eventually Beattie himself; but the paper was dropped about eighteen months after its commencement.

allusion to a mention of him in the "Essay on Poetry and Music," and that it was to be executed by Angelica Kauffman and engraved by Bartolozzi.

Mr. Baron Gordon urges him to come to Cluny, as he is sure the air would do him good. "You might depend upon all possible care and attention," and, particularly, he says, it would be "his own pleasing and instructive employment

"To guard your head from harm,
And listen to your lore."

There is a letter from Mr. Forbes Leith, of Whitehaugh, who had applied to Beattie on some subject connected with the theory of music, in which he mentions having sent him a sight of "the old music books which had belonged to my predecessors, and were found by me among some small remains of a valuable library, which my great-great-grandfather, William Forbes, of Tolquhon, possessed about two hundred years ago. I find many of his books marked in 1588. He was then aged thirty-eight years, and he lived till 1643."

NOTE.—The spring of this year had been remarkably fine. Beattie writes on the 9th of April to the Duchess of Gordon: "I walk every day in the fields in quest of that 'vernal delight' which Milton says is able to drive away 'all sadness but despair,' and surely the season is not to blame if I do not find it so. Never was there seen since 1709 (according to old Lady Bracco) so early or so mild a spring. The weather is indeed so wonderful that wise people begin to be alarmed at it. Some think it portends earthquake. Others foretell that it will be followed by an autumn so cold and rainy as to destroy all the fruits of the earth; one gentleman in this neighbourhood is positive that it is the immediate forerunner of frost and snow, which is to eat up every green thing; and in this belief, it is said, that he has opened all his enclosures to his cattle, that they may be beforehand with the said frost and snow. For my part, being neither a conjuror nor a farmer, I think the best thing we can do is to enjoy the good weather while it lasts. If in seventy years we have but one sunny spring, it must be bad husbandry to darken it with clouds of our own raising."

CHAPTER XV.

GORDON RIOTS.

Letter to Sir W. Forbes containing his wishes with regard to his sons, and his own occupations—In another Letter to the same, his anxieties during the winter, and Biddoch's Sermons—Goes to Gordon Castle—The Duchess—Lord George Gordon's Riots—Report of state of feeling in Glasgow by Major Mercer—Beattie visits Sir W. Forbes in Edinburgh, and Duke and Duchess of Gordon in Glasgow—Expedition as far south as Durham with Dr. Dun and James Hay—Spends August and September at Peterhead, and the greater part of October at Gordon Castle—Correspondence with Lady Newhaven, and account of Mrs Beattie's illness to her—Letter from Dr. Johnson—Correspondence with Mrs. Montagu—Papers in *Mirror*—Letters from Boswell and Sylvester Douglas on Scotticisms—Extracts from Letters to Sir W. Forbes, and the Duchess of Gordon—From Mr. Anthony Highmore and Lord W. Gordon—Beattie's Nephew, only son of his Brother David, at College.

BEATTIE's first concern during this winter was to make arrangements for the future of his boys, in case of their being prematurely deprived of their parents, which from the present state of Mrs. Beattie's and his own health seemed not unlikely. His great anxiety was to leave them in the hands of guardians whom he could fully trust to carry out his views with regard to them, and the choice of these guardians he considered "the most, and, indeed, the only material part of my settlement," as "it is scarce necessary for one to make a will who wishes his children to be on an equal footing in regard to inheritance, and whose property chiefly consists in a little money and some movables. I hope I shall leave what may keep them from being a burden on anybody, and may afford them the means of an education somewhat better than what I received myself." This he wrote to Sir W. Forbes, when intimating to him that he had named him, and some other friends, his sons' guardians. Of his boys he goes on to say: "My first wish in regard to them is that they may be good Christians, and, in one way or another, useful in society. Of the youngest I can say nothing, as I know not his character. The elder is much addicted to learning, of a good temper, and excellent capacity, but his constitution is delicate, and I do not think him made for the bustle of life. I have therefore had thoughts of getting him appointed, when he comes of age, my assistant and successor, provided he himself should then have no objection to that way of life. . . . The Church is a scene of business still more tranquil than mine, and, I presume, would not be disagreeable to him. But this is mere conjecture."

To a proposal of Sir William Forbes that he should come to Edinburgh in the spring, Beattie replies, he wishes he could flatter himself with the hope of being able to do so, as he felt that the solitary life he was now leading was not good for him. Since the commencement of his wife's illness, about eighteen months before, Beattie had remained in close attendance on her. This prevented his mixing in outside society, while the weakness of Mrs. Beattie's nerves, making her unable to bear the slightest noise, prevented his asking any one to his own house, which was small. His college duties afforded him some amusement through the day, but the evenings he felt peculiarly tedious. "I sit alone, trying sometimes to read, and sometimes to write, except now and then I give my son a lesson in Virgil."

Yet, even during this winter, his pen was not idle.

"The Grammatical Treatise I told you of," he writes to Sir W. Forbes, "is finished. It is one of the longest, and not one of the worst, of my dissertations. I have also written, since you were here, 'Remarks on Sublimity,' being a sort of counterpart to those on 'Laughter,' but I am not quite pleased with this, nor has it received my last hand. I believe I shall next set about finishing what I formerly threw together on Romance writing and Chivalry, not because it is important, but because it is amusing, and will require no deep study. It is pretty long, too, and, in my jog-trot way, will be an object to me for at least two months. I must be transcribing one or other of my old scrawls; and when one transcribes, one enlarges and corrects insensibly, for I cannot think. I am too much agitated and *distract* (as Lord Chesterfield would say) to read anything that is not very desultory; I cannot play at cards; I could never learn to smoke; and my musical days are over.

"It gives me pain to hear of the fate of poor Cook. I lately read his voyage for the second time, and considered him not only as an excellent writer, an able philosopher, and the most consummate navigator that ever lived, but also as a person of the greatest magnanimity, modesty, and humanity. He was, indeed, one of my greatest favourites, and I look upon his death as an irreparable loss to his country and to mankind."

In addition to his own literary work during this spring, Beattie was preparing for publication a volume of sermons by a deceased friend,¹ which, from the great peculiarity of their style, he found an arduous undertaking.

Meantime, it was becoming more and more apparent to his friends

¹ Mr. Biddoch, the late clergyman of St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel, Aberdeen. He had died leaving his widow in very poor circumstances, and she had applied to Principal Campbell and Dr. Beattie to assist her in preparing two volumes of his sermons for publication by subscription.

that Beattie was sacrificing his own health by confining himself to home, while his presence there was of no real service to his wife ; and at last, having found she did not miss him if he refrained from seeing her, he was prevailed on to leave her in the charge of two attendants, under the supervision of her mother and Dr. Livingstone.

He had promised that, when he left home, his first visit would be to Gordon Castle. He went there about the middle of April, and passed five weeks very happily "for a person who carries unhappiness with him."

How much he owed to the kindness of heart and delicacy of consideration that the Duke and Duchess showed him at this trying time of his life, when the terrible secret of his home could no longer be entirely concealed, and how grateful he felt for their goodness to him, his letter of thanks to the Duchess, written on his return home, best shows.

"ABERDEEN,

"May 27th, 1780.

"I should write a treatise instead of a letter if I were to be particular in my acknowledgments of gratitude for what I have experienced of your Grace's and the Duke's goodness. I shall only say (for I know you would not read me to an end if I were on this subject to use many words), that I am perfectly sensible of your kind attention to the peculiarities of my case. I saw by many instances every day how solicitous you were to withdraw my view from everything that could create or revive painful thoughts. My gratitude and admiration (which are two very pleasing and *healthy* emotions), were not wholly inadequate, and the consequences are visible to everybody. Since my return I have been complimented on my improved looks ; though I have felt but little of that pleasure which the sight of home used formerly to produce in me. In fact home is not good for me at present, and I shall leave it as soon as I can."

The kindness of the Duke and Duchess, more particularly that of the latter, was not confined to this period of Beattie's life. It was continued till his death. Sir W. Forbes, who was the friend of both parties, says of the Duchess's relation to Beattie : "So tenderly solicitous was she at all times to soothe his sorrows and dissipate those gloomy ideas that preyed upon his mind, that he found consolation and relief in the free interchange of thoughts with which her good nature delighted to indulge him ; and he was never more happy than in the society he found in Gordon Castle." "He was charmed," again to quote Sir W. Forbes, "by her beauty, the brilliancy of her wit and her cultivated understanding."

This culture, or the increase of it, she partly owed to her intercourse with Beattie. He took much pleasure in directing her reading, and was often astonished at the rapidity with which she grasped the salient points of a book. He used to say, he frequently gave her a book one day and was astonished to hear her discussing it the next at table with her guests, when he knew she had been so occupied as not possibly to have had time to read it except overnight.

In the beginning of June, the anti-popery riots, in which Lord George Gordon, the Duke's brother, took a leading part, broke out in London. When the news of these riots reached Gordon Castle, the Duke was in Glasgow on military duty with the North Fencibles, and the Duchess was alone. In great agitation, she hurried up to Edinburgh to be nearer sources of information, and there she found Beattie, who had gone to visit Sir W. Forbes. He was much with her, trying to allay her anxiety; and he seems in some degree to have succeeded.

There is a letter from Lord Kinnoull, in which he thanks Beattie for complying with the Duchess's request to let him know what she had learned on arriving in Edinburgh, as he had seen her on her way there, and had been much concerned at her great distress. He adds, "I endeavoured to calm her apprehensions about her children, and am happy to hear they are now entirely removed. To palliate Lord George's conduct was as vain an attempt as to flatter her Grace with the expectation that he would escape the punishment due to a crime of such magnitude, and which had been attended with such ruinous consequences. You judged wisely in encouraging her Grace's resolution of going to Glasgow.¹ It is happy, that they are together, as from each other they will receive mutual consolation; and reciprocally cherish in each other's mind the solid satisfaction of their own innocence. I sympathise cordially with the honest, worthy Duke. His affliction must be inexpressibly great.

"We, who have no intercourse with the ministers of state, must as yet be ignorant of the real causes of this dreadful and destructive confusion, which rose to so exorbitant a height; whether it was owing solely to the intemperate zeal of wild enthusiasm, or whether when the flame was once kindled other ingredients were not thrown in to feed and increase it; for the plan was deep, and popery has no connection with the destruction of the Bank and the possession of the Tower. It interests the whole nation that the matter should be investigated to the bottom and fully disclosed."

Beattie afterwards joined the Duke and Duchess in Glasgow, and remained with them until, the review of the regiment being over, they could go to London, when he returned to Edinburgh.

While in Glasgow, Beattie, seemingly at the request of the

¹ To join the Duke.

Attorney-General, made some inquiry as to the state of public feeling with regard to the popery riots, and got the following statement from Major Mercer, who was at that time acting as one of the officers of the Fencibles :—

“GLASGOW,
“July 3rd, 1780.

“ . . . I have according to your directions made a good deal of inquiry about the state of the ‘brethren,’ in this part of the country, and I find much diversity of opinion upon the subject. My friends of the College tell me that there is one Bell, a fanatic preacher, who is just about publishing by subscription a libel against the ‘Whore of Babylon,’ but they do not imagine that his nonsense will in any way affect the peace of the public, and they seem to laugh at the idea of an insurrection. Sir James Campbell, on the contrary, who commands the West Fencibles, tells me that he has heard it asserted by people of credit, that the ‘brethren’ continue to hold assemblies, and threaten to draw the ‘sword of the Lord and of Gideon’ should a hair of Lord George Gordon’s head fall to the ground. This is the strain which they held during your stay here, and considering the strange spirit of the times it is impossible to say to what extremities a mad populace may proceed ; but, as they can produce no formidable leader, and can act upon no concerted plan, I think their countrymen, the West Fencibles, will find no difficulty in reducing them to reason. I own I am very happy at the removal of the North Fencibles from this part of the country, as the animosity which subsisted between the rabble and our soldiers would have naturally enough disposed both parties to the perpetration of all sorts of mischief.”

On receiving this report, Lord Henderland, the Attorney-General, wrote to Beattie :—

“BROWN’S SQUARE,
“July 4th, 1780.

“I had the honour of yours, and return you a thousand thanks for the obliging information it contains. Major Mercer appears to me as he always did, a sound-headed, sensible man and much to be relied on.”

Before Beattie returned home, he paid a short visit to Mr. Scott, of Hurden, on Tweedside, and then, having been joined by Dr. Dun and his eldest boy, made an excursion as far south as Durham.

On returning to Aberdeen, finding no improvement in the state of matters there, he went to Peterhead with his boy for two months, spent the greater part of October at Gordon Castle, a few days at Cluny Castle, and returned to Aberdeen just in time for the opening of the College Session.

Though still as much as possible carefully hiding his home sorrows from outsiders, it was impossible for Beattie any longer to remain silent to his intimate friends. He felt that the fact of his absenting himself so much from home while his wife remained there an invalid, required an explanation to those who, he knew, inquired from real interest in his wife and himself, not from mere curiosity. So, when Lady Newhaven wrote begging she might be told the whole truth with regard to Mrs. Beattie's illness, "be it ever so grievous," he gave her a detailed account of all his wife had suffered and of her present state. Regarding himself he adds: "I will not tell you what anxieties I have undergone, and what hours I have spent in solitary sorrow, approaching to despair; how unwilling I was, for many months, to believe what I too plainly saw; what efforts I have made to conceal my anguish from the world, especially from my elder boy, whom I have hitherto kept ignorant of the dreadful truth, because his sensibilities are very strong considering his years, and much too strong, I am afraid, for his constitution, and for the trials which Providence seems to have appointed for him. I am, indeed, exceedingly distressed on his account, and shall, I believe, be compelled to pursue one or other of these two plans: either to move myself and all the movable part of my family to another house; or, if this should be found impracticable on account of the tongues of the neighbourhood (which in small towns are most capriciously petulant), to resign my office in the College and leave Aberdeen at once and for ever. . . . I am sorry to have troubled your ladyship with so sad and so long a detail. I am sure I shall have your sympathy. I beg to be favoured with your advice. I will endeavour to keep up my spirits, if possible; to do the best I can for those who depend upon me; to be sensible of the many great and unmerited mercies which I still enjoy, and to be resigned to the will of Him whose dispensations (though sometimes they may appear grievous to us), are all most perfectly benevolent, good and wise."¹

On this last sentence, in her reply, Lady Newhaven remarks, "To this I subscribe most devoutly, as my fixed and settled creed."

Accounts of the poor state of Beattie's health and rumours of his

¹ Lady Newhaven's letters to Beattie at this time were a great contrast to his. They are full of the details of the approaching marriage of her adopted daughter, Miss Graham, to Sir Henry Dashwood, of Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire. These details she knew would be of great interest to Mrs. Beattie as well as to her husband, if she were able to take interest in anything. The Beatties had known Miss Graham since her girlhood, and had been kept fully informed of her progress in education, and in beauty both of character and person, by Lord and Lady Newhaven. Besides, Lady Newhaven had encouraged a correspondence between her Mary and the young Minstrel, as she designated Beattie's elder boy, which had kept Miss Graham personally in contact with the parents as well as with the boy. The young lady was now sixteen, and had

wife's affliction must have prompted the following kind letter from Dr. Johnson :—

"BOLT COURT, FLEET STREET,

"August 21st, 1780.

"More years than I have any delight to record, have passed since you and I saw one another. Of this, however, there is no reason for making any reprehensory complaint, *sic fata ferunt*: but methinks there might pass some small interchange of regard between us. If you say that I ought to have written, I now write; and I write to tell you that I have much kindness for you and Mrs. Beattie, and that I wish your health better, and your life long. Try change of air, and come a few degrees southward; a softer climate may do you both good. Winter is coming on and London will be warmer and gayer, and busier, and more fertile of amusement than Aberdeen."

The rest of the letter contained news of common friends, and amongst other things mentions the serious illness of Mrs. Montagu. This illness had prevented her for some time from writing to Beattie, and when at last she was able to do so, she was so weak that she dared only say a few words to him on the subject of his anxieties about his children. This she told him, when towards the end of the year she was able fully to sympathize with him in all his troubles, the extent of which by that time she knew.

In the beginning of the year, Beattie had sent the Duchess of Gordon copies of the *Mirror*, to which he had contributed two papers on Dreaming. The publishers had forwarded to him that paper regularly from its commencement, and had refused any remuneration, but a return in kind; so, as he had never refused the terms, he thought himself bound by a sort of debt of honour to contribute those papers, to which he afterwards added a third on the same subject.

Boswell writes to ask a copy of Beattie's "Scotticisms" for Mr. Sinclair, of Ulbster, who was engaged on a similar work; and Sylvester Douglas, on receiving a copy of the same pamphlet, finds that Beattie had anticipated so much of what he had to say on the most material branch of the subject—provincial phraseologies—that he would do wisely to abandon his design of writing on the subject. Yet he has bestowed so much time upon it, he cannot help wishing to bring it to a conclusion, which he hopes to do during the long vacation. In the same letter, he begs Beattie to furnish him with particulars concerning the expense of education,

been introduced into society that season, where she had met with much admiration. Several offers for her hand had been declined, on account of her youth; but this seemed to promise so much happiness, from the character of Sir Henry, that a glad consent had been given to the engagement.

at both King's and Marischal Colleges, for a gentleman whose son had acquired some bad habits at one of the English public schools, and who wishes to remove him from temptation to vice and dissipation. To these inquiries Beattie replied, sending him the desired information.

To the Duchess of Gordon Beattie gives an account of his having met Lord Kaimes, and of their full reconciliation :—

"ABERDEEN,
"June 2nd, 1780.

"I had lately a *tête-à-tête* of several hours with Lord Kaimes and Mrs. Drummond.¹ There was no company; and we had much conversation on a great variety of subjects—your Grace and the Duke, Lord and Lady F., Mrs. Montagu, David Hume, religion, Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, manufactures, music, Scotch tunes, with the method of playing them, etc.; and I flatter myself that his lordship and I parted with some reluctance on both sides. He assured me he hated Mr. Hume's tenets as much as I did, or could do. He spoke of religion with great reverence. In a word, I found from his conversation that he is just what your Grace had described him to me, and that all other accounts I had heard of him were wide of the truth."

Mr. Anthony Highmore, writing from Bury Court, St. Mary Axe, London, pays a tribute of gratitude to Beattie, both in prose and in verse, for the help he had got in escaping from the maze of prejudice and disbelief and in returning to principle and duty by studying the "Essay on Truth." Two lines of his verse were :—

"Truth sunk oppress'd, by Atheists' rage subdued;
But Beattie spoke, and Truth her power renewed!"

Lord William Gordon writes to say that his brother's trial is put off till February. This letter is written in such a jocular strain that the fear of the extreme sentence of the law being passed upon Lord George must by this time have seemed to his relatives very improbable.

From a note in Beattie's account book, we learn that his brother David's only son—a second James Beattie—attended college during the winter of 1779–1780, and held a bursary. His uncle, unable from the circumstances of his home to have the lad living with him, had been overlooking and guiding his expenses and his studies. James Beattie, the younger, in after years became his uncle's colleague as Professor of Natural Philosophy.

¹ Lord Kaimes's wife, who had taken the name of Drummond on succeeding to the estate belonging to her family.

1781.

CHAPTER XVI.

LONDON AND EDINBURGH.

Determines to go to London and Edinburgh to show his *New Essays* to his friends, and secure a publisher for them—Mrs. Montagu advises his taking his son along with him—Lord William Gordon announces his Marriage—Journey to and life in Edinburgh and London—Reception of his son by his friends—Recognition by the King—Disposes of his manuscript to Strahan and Cadell in London and to Creech in Edinburgh—Dr. Arbuthnot's portrait—Character of David Valentine—Illness at Oxford and journey home—Goes to Peterhead—On returning to Aberdeen, moves into a smaller house with his elder son and niece—Letters from the Rev. William Trail—Principal G. Campbell—Mr. Alexander Chalmers—Dr. Thomas Percival, Manchester—Mr. William Gregory—Correspondence with Mr. Hamilton, Bath—Beattie to Mr. Williamson, Oxford.

DURING the winter of 1780-1781, Beattie had put the finishing touches to the new collection of essays upon which he had for some time been engaged ; and when his college duties were over, he was meditating a journey to Edinburgh and London to show his work to the friends whom he always consulted before giving his writings to the public, and, if it met with their approbation, to secure a publisher. As it was not good for his elder boy, now in his thirteenth year, to be left at home, he was anxious to take him along with him, but, before determining to do so, he asked Mrs. Montagu's advice. She not only approved of his plan, but earnestly urged his carrying it out, as being a necessary part of his son's education. A studious boy of genius, as she considered him to be, was apt to overlook "the ordinary modes of human life," and "your care must be to guard against his having any inferiorities in little subjects but of every-day use." This, she thought, could best be done by arousing his attention to externals by travel and mixing with strangers. She hoped to settle at Sandleford early in May, and she begged that James should be handed over to her care on coming to London : "and I will teach him the vulgar tongue of vulgar life. He will grow less wise, and less learned, but more healthy and more gay the longer he stays with me."

Thus encouraged, Beattie and his son left Aberdeen in the end of March. Shortly before leaving, he had a letter from Lord William Gordon, rejoicing to hear that he proposed being in England, and sending him a pressing invitation from Lady Irvine to visit her at Temple Newsam, Yorkshire, assuring him that the oftener he came the welcomer he would be. Lord William was then on a visit to

this lady, one of whose daughters, he proceeds to tell Beattie, he was about to marry.

The travellers took the journey to London very leisurely, visiting many places of interest by the way. A week was spent in Edinburgh, and a short time in York in consequence of a carriage accident, which, in those days of posting, seems to have been rather a common occurrence. Nothing, however, more serious than a few bruises and cuts from broken glass were the consequences; and they were fortunate in finding many north-country friends among the officers of the regiment quartered in York, one of whom acted as surgeon on the occasion.

There also Mr. Creech happened to be, who, on hearing that Beattie was about to publish a new set of essays, without even asking their titles, "told me he would give me my own terms." This handsome offer Beattie was inclined "to accept upon the spot, if I had not thought myself bound in honour to give Dilly the first offer."

The last stoppage, after seeing the colleges at Cambridge, was at Ware; "where," he writes to the Duchess of Gordon, "I called upon my friend Mr. Soot, the Quaker whom I have had the honour to mention to your Grace as the author of 'Moral Eclogues' and other elegant pieces; as the proprietor of a fine little place, and beautiful grotto, which he has dressed out with excellent taste. I stayed a day with him; and made him very happy when I told him that your Grace would probably honour him with a visit when you came to London. He is just about publishing a volume of very good poems."

On reaching London, they took up their quarters, by the advice of the Bishop of Chester (Dr. Porteus) and in order to be near him, in the house of one of the King's Messengers, in Middle Scotland Yard, where they were very comfortably and reasonably accommodated.¹

How Beattie employed the time while waiting for the criticisms of his friends on his Essays, he relates to Sir William Forbes:—

"MIDDLE SCOTLAND YARD, WHITEHALL,
"June 1st, 1781.

"If you will not allow eating, and drinking, and walking, and visiting to be work, I must confess I have for these five weeks been very idle. Yet in such a perpetual hurry have I been kept by this sort of idleness, that I had no time to write, to read, or even to think. For the amusement of my young fellow-traveller, and in order also to drive away painful ideas from myself, I have run through a complete encyclopedia of shows, monsters, and other

¹ For a dining-room, excellent bedroom, and two light closets they paid a guinea a week.

curiosities, from 'Douglas' at Drury Lane¹ to the Puppet Show at Astley's Riding School; from the wonderful heifer, with two heads, to Dr. Graham and his celestial brilliancy; from the great lion in the Tower, and the stuffed elephant's skin at Sir Ashton Lever's, to the little Welsh woman in Holborn, who though twenty-three years of age weighs only eighteen pounds.

"But—what you will readily believe to have been much more beneficial to my health and spirits—I have been visiting all my friends again and again, and found them as affectionate and attentive as ever. Death has indeed deprived me of some since I was last here—of Garrick, and Armstrong, and poor Harry Smith—but I have still many left; some of whom are higher in the world and in better health than they were in 1775; Johnson grows in grace as he grows in years. He not only has better health, and a fresher complexion than ever he had before (at least since I knew him), but he has contracted a gentleness of manner which pleases everybody. Some ascribe this to the good company to which he has of late been more accustomed than in the early part of his life, and particularly to the influence of Mrs. Thrale. There may be something in this; but I am apt to think that the good health he has enjoyed for a long time is the chief cause. Mr. Thrale appointed him one of his executors and left him two hundred pounds; everybody says he should have left him two hundred a year; which from a fortune like his would have been a very inconsiderable reduction. The world is making a match of it between the widow and him. You will be delighted with his new Lives, particularly with his Pope and Addison. To Lyttleton, I think he has not done justice, and he is unaccountably severe on my poor friend Gray. However, the book is very entertaining, and contains a great variety of sound criticism and pleasing information. Young's Life is the worst; it is really ill-written—but Johnson did not write it; he had it from a Mr. Crofts, a lawyer, the author of 'Love and Madness,' and some other things."

His friends having seen his essays and expressed their approval of them, Beattie put them into the hands of the booksellers. The price he had set on them himself was a hundred and fifty pounds, but Dr. Porteus would not hear of so small a sum, and insisted on his asking two hundred,² taking his promise that he would not accept less, "because, he said, he himself would undertake to procure that sum for me."

To this Dilly demurred, but Strahan and Cadell in London and Creech in Edinburgh at once agreed. The book, however, was not

¹ "Tragedy of Douglas," by Home.

² The Bishop thought two hundred pounds too little, but Beattie would not ask more.

published till 1783, as he writes at this time: "I take all my papers back with me to Scotland, as I intend to correct the whole, and transcribe many passages, before I send them to the press."

Mrs. Montagu had been prevented both by illness and by business from leaving town as early as she had expected, and had been obliged to postpone her plan of having James Hay with her immediately on his coming to London. But, as soon as she was settled at Sandleford, she claimed his visit, and a day was fixed for his arrival there.

Beattie had never told his son that this visit was in contemplation; fearing lest, if Mrs. Montagu's health should prevent its taking place, he might be disappointed. He never anticipated that the boy's shyness would make the idea of leaving his father and going to live with a stranger so painful to him, and would agitate him so much, that he would feel it impossible to force him to go, in case by doing so he should injure his health. He felt this the more strongly as the boy did not want in manliness in other respects, and was quite aware of the folly of his behaviour, blaming himself for it, and striving ineffectually against it; thus, indeed, showing how much the unnatural life of seclusion his mother's illness had caused him to lead for so long had told on his nervous strength and increased his natural shyness. Beattie pleaded his health as an excuse to Mrs. Montagu, but promised that he would himself visit her in a few days bringing James along with him. Before these few days, however, were past, Mrs. Montagu had a renewed and very severe attack of illness, which necessitated her going, as soon as she was able to travel, to Bath.

Probably, the object that Mrs. Montagu had in view for James's improvement was better attained by his remaining with his father and seeing so much of life, than by spending the time in the country, chiefly in the society of ladies. Of the life which the boy and his father were leading, Beattie writes to the boy's grandfather, Dr. Dun.¹

"Jamie has indeed met with the greatest civilities from everybody; and since he left home has seen more of the world and a greater variety of the best company than most people have an opportunity of seeing in many years. This I doubt not will be of use to him hereafter; for though he is very bashful, and will hardly open his mouth when he is with strangers, he is very attentive to what passes; and I make him keep a journal of our transactions, and particularly to mention the names of the great or famous people whom we happen to see. The list for yesterday will be very considerable; for after dining with Lady Irvine and her family and Lord and Lady William Gordon, we went to Lord William's, partly

¹ The extracts are taken from several letters.

to drink tea and eat strawberries,¹ but chiefly to see the Persian ambassadors, who were dressed in the habit of their country, and though they spoke but little English behaved very politely. Our company was very brilliant—the Duke of Gloucester, Lord and Lady Pembroke, and their son Lord Herbert, the three ladies Waldegrave (daughters of the Duchess of Gloucester by her former husband), Lady Frances Scott (sister of the Duke of Buccleugh), and many others. Lord William presented me to the Duke of Gloucester, and I had the honour of a conversation with his Royal Highness. . . . We dine to-day with the Bishop of Bath and Wells, on Monday with Lady Pembroke, and on Tuesday with Mr. Strahan. Lady Irvine has given us positive orders to dine with her every day we are not otherwise engaged. Her son-in-law Lord William and his lady always dine with her, though they have a house of their own. . . . Jamie has seen Dr. Johnson, who was very kind to him. Nay, what will surprise you more, he has been introduced to Paoli, and John Wilkes, and very politely received by both. Wilkes is a pleasant companion and makes a joke of his pretended aversion to Scotchmen. He and I have been visiting one another.

“On Friday last I attended the King’s levée with Lord William Gordon. His Majesty knew me at first sight, though he had not seen me these six years, and spoke to me with his wonted affability and condescension. He asked me several questions, and, when I told him I had something almost ready for the press, was pleased to say, “You are one of those unfashionable authors who never publish anything but what is excellent.” The King is in perfectly good health; I think I have never seen him look so well. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord North, Lord Grantham, and Bishop Hurd were at the same levée, and all spoke to me. I dined with the Archbishop last Saturday.”

To Sir W. Forbes, Beattie wrote: “I have seen Bishop Hurd once and again; and last Sunday at Kanewood passed a truly classic day with Lord Mansfield and him. I never saw Lord Mansfield better. He is in perfect health and good spirits, and looks no older than fifty-five. He walked with me three miles and a half without the least appearance of fatigue. . . .

“I went lately to Rochester on a visit to Mr. Langton and Lady Rothes.” At Chatham I saw that wonderful sight, a ninety-gun ship on the stocks. But from the top of Shooter’s Hill, on my return, I saw a sight still more magnificent, a complete view of this

¹ The early hours of entertainments and their simplicity form a great contrast to the fashions now in vogue. Five, or half-past five, was the *very late* dinner hour of people of fashion, and this evening assembly met at half-past six, and the Beatties left it at eight. As to the entertainment, James writes in his journal: “The room was finely adorned with flowers, and there were tea, coffee, strawberries and cream, gooseberries, oranges, etc. etc., on a side table.”

² Mr. Langton’s wife.

huge metropolis, from Chelsea to Blackwall, the background embellished with a violent storm of thunder and lightning, which roared and flashed for an hour without intermission."

Just before leaving London, Beattie wrote to Mr. Arbuthnot to inquire whether it was at King's or at Marischal College that his "great kinsman," Dr. Arbuthnot, physician to Queen Anne, studied. The reason of the inquiry was that "Dr. Hunter has an original picture of the famous Dr. Arbuthnot, which he had as a present from Mrs. Anne Arbuthnot, and which he wishes to give to that university, which had the honour to initiate the Doctor in the elements of learning."¹

Another letter was sent to his sister, Mrs. Valentine. Her family consisted of two sons, besides her daughter. Both sons were in the Navy. The younger, James, at this time a midshipman in Admiral Hood's ship, had lately been present at the taking of St. Eustatia; the elder, David, had been serving on board the *Ariadne* which had just returned to port. Beattie had seen the captain under whom David had served, and writes his report of her son to his sister. It was a very gratifying one, as his commander had highly commended him, not only for proficiency in seamanship but also for bravery and general excellence of character.

Beattie and his son left London on the 29th of July, intending to pay many visits on their homeward journey; but shortly after arriving at Oxford, which was their first place of stoppage, Beattie had a sudden attack of illness, which passed off in a day or two but left him weak and unfit to proceed on his journey for a week. The day before he left, he was able to dine with Sir Henry and Lady Dashwood at Kirtlington Park; but his intercourse with all his friends was sadly abridged by this illness, and all thoughts of paying other visits had to be given up. They proceeded northwards slowly, stopping to see several places of interest on their way. Blenheim House and Park, Stratford-on-Avon and Shakespeare's grave, and Warwick Castle were visited, and the silk manufactures at Derby inspected. In Scotland, they breakfasted one morning at Melrose, and, after seeing the Abbey, got to Edinburgh that evening, where they remained for a week with Sir William Forbes.

Instead of gaining strength during the journey, as he had hoped, Beattie lost ground, and arrived in Edinburgh "so feeble and spiritless, I was hardly able to see my most intimate friends."

On his return to Aberdeen, Beattie repaired to Peterhead. He was accompanied by his son, and also by his niece. They remained there till the end of October, when they returned to Aberdeen, but not to their former home. Beattie had at last decided, that chiefly

¹ It was Marischal College, where the portrait now hangs in the Picture Gallery.

for his boy's sake, in order that he might "have those amusements and that company which it is natural for him to desire, and right that he should have," he would not continue to occupy the same house as his wife. Dr. Dun took his place there, and undertook the immediate superintendence of his daughter, as her mother had died during the autumn; while Beattie went into a very small house which communicated with his old home by a short passage through a garden. Though the house was not only small, "but by no means convenient," it yet held himself, and his son and niece, and he thought himself happy in the prospect of peace within its walls. This he wrote to Mrs. Montagu, who, in return, had to tell him of her removal to the spacious mansion she had just built for herself in Portman Square.

In the end of the year, Beattie had again to decline an invitation to spend Christmas at Gordon Castle; as at that season the College granted but three days' vacation. Among the letters that Beattie received this year, the following may be noted:—

The Rev. William Trail¹ writes from Dublin that much interest had been shown in Beattie's letter to Dr. Blair, on psalmody, by those to whom he had shown it in Ireland; and a great desire had been expressed that it might be more generally known, as it was hoped some one might be induced to attempt a new versification of the psalms, with Beattie's assistance if he continued to refuse to undertake the task himself. Mr. Trail had, therefore, handed two copies of the letter to a Dublin bookseller, to show to any gentleman likely to be interested in the subject; and this bookseller had lately applied to him for leave to print more copies of it. This, Mr. Trail had granted, as he thought Beattie would not object.

Principal George Campbell, writing on College matters, adds:—

"ABERDEEN,

"August 1st, 1781.

"I am very much obliged to you for the notice you were so good as to take of my intended publication on the Gospels, to two of the Bishops. It can do no hurt, and may be of service. You will perhaps be surprised when I tell you that I have never yet mentioned it to any man but yourself, except once in a letter to Dr. Tucker. I intended mentioning it to Principal Robertson, whom I saw in Edinburgh, but did not. When you come to town I shall be very happy to put my manuscript into your hands if you can find as much leisure as to give it a perusal. . . . We had lately a letter from our Chancellor, in answer to one written to him intimating our design of building an Observatory and procuring a better supply of

¹ William Trail, nephew of the Bishop of Down and Connor, who had lately been translated to the living of Lisburn, with a stall in the Cathedral of Connor.

astronomical instruments, in which letter he has promised us an Equatorial and some other instruments of the best quality for our Observatory, and all his medical books (which Dr. William Fordyce, who brought his letter, says is a noble collection) for our library."

An old pupil, Alexander Chalmers (who afterwards edited the Biographical Dictionary, and wrote a Memoir of Beattie), "emboldened by your general character of friendship to your old pupils," relates the series of disappointments he had met with since coming to London, and his final determination to turn to literature as a profession. His first essays, published anonymously in newspapers, had met with such success that he was encouraged to bring out a book, and his request to Beattie was that he would give him an introduction to Dilly.

Dr. Thomas Percival, of Manchester, sends the last sheets of a Socratic discourse on Truth and Faithfulness (Beattie had already received the first part), which he is anxious to submit to the criticism of a few of his most intelligent friends. He trusts Dr. Beattie will not refuse him the honour which he solicits of ranking him among this number.

William Gregory, the younger son of his friend Dr. Gregory, writes from Balliol College, Oxford, asking advice as to the composition of sermons, and what method he should follow to train himself in this most important branch of a clergyman's duty. He has been following the course of reading which Beattie had advised when he had formerly taken the liberty of asking his advice on his studies, and he intends going to London to wait on the Bishop of Chester, to whom Beattie had mentioned him.

There are several long letters written in the end of this year by Mr. Charles Hamilton, a relative of Beattie's friend Miss Cooper, and by another friend, Dr. Wilson, all residing in Bath. The substance of the correspondence is as follows:—

Mr. Hamilton begins by reminding Beattie of their having met at a friend's house in Bromley eleven years previously. To the hours he had then spent in Beattie's company he says he would ever look back with the utmost satisfaction, but at that time he had not read any of his works. Indeed, it was only within the last month that he had done so; but, having once begun, he had found it impossible to desist "till I read every word with the utmost attention." The impression made on him was such that, had his son not been already educated, he would never have ceased his entreaty till he had prevailed on Beattie to undertake his education; but as he cannot ask this advantage for his own son, would Beattie be prevailed on to undertake the superintendence of the education of a young man of good, but moderate fortune, an only son, whose parents were at a loss as to what

University to send him, where his morals, as well as his learning, would be attended to?

Beattie had answered this letter by giving information about the Scottish Universities, and some account of his own circumstances, to show the impossibility of his undertaking the charge of a young man's education. He had mentioned the frail state of his own health, and hinted at sorrow and anxiety that oppressed him.

This letter had touched Mr. Hamilton deeply, and had aroused in him a great desire to remove in some degree Beattie's causes of anxiety. What was the source of his grief Mr. Hamilton could not divine; but he at once felt that anxiety for the future of his children, in the event of his own death, was the chief source of Beattie's distress, and eagerly offers to do all he can for them. "Sure I am that nothing in your power will be omitted, but your retired situation, and various occupations, will probably afford opportunity to your friends to forward your plans and wishes; and if I may judge others by myself I can answer that they will think it both an honour and a pleasure to have their services accepted. I don't know when I have felt more real satisfaction than since I have conceived the hope of supplying your place, in any degree, to your children, in case they should have the misfortune to be deprived of you before they are capable of taking care of themselves. . . ." Mr. Hamilton adds that, having communicated to "our worthy friend Dr. Wilson, who is so sincerely and warmly attached to you," the purport both of "your letter and of this, he is so much pleased with the professions I have made, that he commissions me to request you will consider them as coming from us both, and as equally binding on him."

Beattie gratefully accepted Mr. Hamilton's and Dr. Wilson's offer to take an interest in his children in the event of his own death, at the same time acquainting them with the arrangements he had made regarding them, and the guardians in whose charge he had left them.

In 1777, Mr. Williamson had informed Dr. Beattie of the letter Dr. Horne, of Oxford, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, had written to Adam Smith on the publication of his "Life of Hume," but at the time Beattie had taken no notice of it, the reason of which he explains to Mr. Williamson:—

"**ABERDEEN,**

"*December 5th, 1781.*

"If Dr. Horne has returned to Oxford I beg you will take the first opportunity to present my best respects to him, and assure him that I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour he has done me in his letter to Adam Smith. This acknowledgment comes rather late, but it is not on that account the less sincere. Why it has been so long delayed I now beg leave to explain. The first notice I

received of Dr. Horne's excellent pamphlet was in a short letter from you, which came at a time when my health was in so bad a way that most of my friends here thought I had not many weeks to live. These sufferings, I must acknowledge, drove all literary matters out of my head. Your letter was lost ; and of Dr. Horne's pamphlet I heard nothing more till this last summer, when Lord Mansfield asked me whether I had seen it, speaking of it at the same time in terms of the highest approbation. I was forced to confess I had not seen it, and never heard of it but once ; and to account for this I told his Lordship what I have now told you. At Oxford, you will probably remember, I found it in the beginning of July last, and then it was that I knew for the first time the extent of my obligations to Dr. Horne. I wished immediately, as you know, to pay my respects to him, but he was gone out of town. Since my return from England I find the pamphlet has given universal satisfaction ; and some of my friends have wished that a small and cheap edition of it could be printed and circulated all over the country, as they think it might counterwork the unwearied efforts Mr. Hume's friends have long been making to extol his character and depress mine."

1782.

CHAPTER XVII.

DISSERTATIONS ON LANGUAGE AND BEAUTY.

Studies Hebrew to perfect his "Dissertation on the Theory of Language"—Submits his Discourse on "Beauty" to the criticism of Sir Joshua Reynolds—Letter from him—Letters from Pinkerton, Alexander Chalmers, and Mr. Soot, of Amwell—Beattie writes to Mr. Cameron on the Versification of the Psalms—Correspondence with Mr. Baron Gordon, of Cluny, on his election as Rector of Marischal College—Translates Pope's "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady" into Latin verse—Goes to Gordon Castle—Letter to Dr. Porteus—Attack of Influenza—Goes to Edinburgh with the manuscripts of his Dissertations—Death of the Honourable Charles Boyd—Pays visits in the North, and goes to Peterhead in the Autumn—Moves into a larger house in Aberdeen, that he may have both his boys with him—Presentation by Marischal College of the Degree of M.D. to Mr. Laing, Peterhead—Letters from Principal Campbell—Letter from Mr. Baron Gordon—Letter from Beattie to Mr. Williamson, Oxford—The weather during the year.

THE early months of the year 1782 seem to have been less harassed by anxiety and bad health than had been Beattie's lot for many previous years. Mrs. Beattie's state remained unchanged; but as nothing that had been suggested for her relief had been left untried, and as she was as comfortable as it was possible in her sad state to make her, he could apply himself to his other duties in his new dwelling without acute anxiety, and without that constant strain on his nerves which his being in the same house as his wife had entailed.

He was busy during the winter, giving the final touches to his Dissertations; and, in order to enlarge and perfect his "Theory of Language," he devoted some time to the study of Hebrew. His discourse on "Beauty"¹ he submitted to Sir Joshua Reynolds's criticism, begging him to draw his pen through any passages he might disapprove. Sir Joshua wrote in reply:—

"LONDON,

"March 31st, 1782.

"I am very much flattered by your giving me a sight of your Essay, which I assure you I have read over and over with the greatest attention, and, I may add, with the greatest pleasure and improvement. About twenty years since I thought much on this subject, and am now glad to find many of those ideas which then passed in my mind put in such good order by so excellent a

¹ In the "Dissertation on Imagination."

metaphysician. My view of the question did not extend beyond my own profession ; it regarded only the beauty of form which I attributed entirely to custom or habit. You have taken a larger compass, including, indeed, everything that gives delight, every mental and corporeal excellence, and have adorned your philosophy with the most happy illustrations, which are both convincing and entertaining. Indeed, the question appears to me to be very thoroughly investigated. I thought once I should have returned you an Essay as long as yours. I wrote many sheets and some long reasoning, but found them at last entirely needless, that you had done all that was necessary, and in a much better manner, so threw them in the fire.

"I am much obliged to you for the honourable place you have given me cheek by jowl with Raphael and Titian, but I seriously think these names are too great to be associated with any modern name whatever ; even if that modern was equal to either of them it would oppose too strongly our prejudices. I am far from wishing to decline the honour of having my name inserted, but I should think it will do better by itself—supposing it were thus : 'but we do not find this affectation in the pictures of Reynolds, and in his discourses he has particularly cautioned the student against it' ; and in the second place where I am mentioned, leaving out Titian, I shall make a respectable figure. Sometimes by endeavouring to do too much the effect of the whole is lost. I fear you will think me very impertinent in taking such liberties.

"Your idea of producing the line of beauty by taking the medium of the two extremes, exactly coincides with my idea, and its beauty I think may fairly be deduced from habit. All lines are either curved or straight, and that which partakes equally of each is the medium or average of all lines and therefore more beautiful than any other line ; notwithstanding this, an artist would act preposterously that should take every opportunity to introduce this line in his works as Hogarth himself did, who appears to have taken an aversion to a straight line. His pictures therefore want that line of firmness and stability which is produced by straight lines ; this conduct therefore may truly be said to be unnatural, for it is not the conduct of Nature.

"What you have imputed to convenience and contrivance, I think may without violence be put to the account of habit, as we are more used to that form in nature (and I believe in art, too) which is the *most* convenient. Fitness and beauty being always united in animals, as well as men, they are fit in proportion as they are beautiful, and beautiful in proportion as they are fit, which makes it difficult to determine what is the original cause ; as I said before, I am inclined to habit, and that we determine by habit in regard to beauty without waiting for the slower determination of reason. I am aware

that this reasoning goes upon a supposition that we are more used to beauty than deformity, and that we are so, I think, I have proved in a little Essay which I wrote about twenty-five years since, and which Dr. Johnson published in his *Idler*, if you think it worth while to look into it.

"May not all beauty proceeding from association of ideas be reduced to the principle of habit or experience? You see I am bringing everything into my old principle, but I will now have done, for fear I should throw this letter likewise in the fire; and now conclude with my sincere thanks for the pleasure you have given and indeed the compliment you have paid me in thinking me worthy of seeing this work in manuscript. I ought likewise to make some apology for keeping it so long. The truth is, when I received it I was very busy in writing notes on Mason's translation of Fresnoy's poem on painting, which Mr. Mason waited for, and it is now printing at York."

Although occupied with his own writings, Beattie never failed to take an interest in those of others, or to lend a helping hand where he could to old or young authors who applied to him for criticism, or for assistance, in the publication of their works. During this spring, he had several such applications. Pinkerton, who had dedicated his first published poem to Beattie, was at this time bringing out the second edition of his "Rimes," and writes to beg him to make some mention of him and his works in the Essays or Dissertations he is about to publish, if it can possibly be done with connexion and propriety, adding: "You must needs be sensible what value the judgment of a writer of established reputation adds to a work by a young author."

Beattie's answer must have been favourable, as Pinkerton replies: "I cannot a moment delay to offer you my best acknowledgments for the favour you do my little work, by noticing it in such kind terms; a favour that can only be equalled by the manner in which it is granted. Though nothing could flatter my vanity more than to be named by you in public, as your friend, yet I agree with you that more credit may arise to the work from its being named as it were accidentally. Nothing could be better than your terms or occasion, so I beg everything may remain as you have been so good as to place it."

Beattie's old pupil, Mr. Chalmers, writes an account of the literary work in which he is at present engaged, which, when published, was to be dedicated to Beattie, and of this dedication he says: "In my dedication I shall observe the plan you have laid down, and conduct my pencil so that the whole shall be a seemly picture of esteem and truth, and not the daubing of hackneyed flattery. I may well add that 'I heard your lectures with pleasure.' They were indeed

the first and most powerful inducement I ever received to make me serious in the pursuit of learning, and I have been profited in proportion as I have made them my study. They are now on the table before me—a copy corrected by your hand—and it is to an attentive perusal of them that I may attribute what of correctness or regularity there is in my writings.”

Mr. Soot, of Amwell, sends four sheets of odes in addition to others he had sent before, “of which I shall be happy to have thy opinion” and, among other pieces of literary news in his letter, he says: “The controversy about Rowley and Chatterton is revived in all its vigour. Bryant has published two octavo volumes and Dean Milles a quarto to prove the antiquity of the poems. When Bryant’s book was advertised I must own I was somewhat startled; I had just finished an ode (contained in one of the sheets now sent), in which I had introduced Chatterton, with high applause of his poems and regret for his fate. I was vexed to think his claim to praise should be disputed, and perhaps annihilated, and I sent for the book in a hurry; but when I had read it I was very easy, as many of the arguments adduced to prove that Chatterton *did not write* the poems, only tended to convince me that he *did*.”

Beattie, writing to Cameron, approved of some versified Psalms he had sent him for his criticism; but at the same time said every attempt to versify the Psalms “serves only to convince me more and more they ought not to be versified. Even Buchanan’s paraphrase, though much admired and in good Latin style, seems to me to be in very bad taste; being as remarkable for verbosity as the original is for majestic brevity and simplicity.”

Many letters passed between Mr. Baron Gordon and Beattie this spring, relating to the election of Mr. Gordon as Lord Rector of Marischal College. In January, Beattie had written to ask Mr. Gordon if he would do his colleagues and himself the honour of accepting the office, which, he says, is indeed in the gift of the students, but as the ratification of their appointment by the Principal and the Professors is necessary to render the election valid, “you will readily suppose the Professors and the students understand one another, and that by the influence of the former the whole matter is determined.” In reply, Mr. Gordon wrote two letters, one to be laid before the Senatus, in which he begs Beattie to assure his colleagues that he feels highly flattered by the proposal, and “embraces it with much satisfaction”; the other a private letter to Beattie himself, in which, after saying the first letter spoke “sincerely and seriously the feelings I entertain on the subject,” he goes on in a jocular strain to inquire whether he could lay claim to all “the load of accomplishment” imposed by the foundation charter on one holding the office of Rector—whether he could be truly inscribed as “*Vir Probus, Doctus, Gravis, et Juris Peritus*”!

After the election took place in March, he again wrote to Beattie : "I do assure you I am much flattered by the election and the manner it came about. I am but little acquainted with Principal Campbell, and not at all with your other colleagues ; so that I consider myself as indebted to you for this piece of public respect, and value it the more on that account as a flattering mark of your acquaintance and the attention you are pleased to honour me with. I am still uncertain when I may move northwards, but I must be in Aberdeenshire before the beginning of May, and then I shall be under your direction as to the ceremonials of my new dignity, which I expect you'll tutor me in without any reserve. Pray tell me if there is any speech to be made? and whether it ought to be in Latin or English ?"¹

In the course of transcribing his Essay during the winter, Beattie wrote to Dr. Porteus that he was led from one digression to another "till at length my book became a fourth larger than it was when I showed it to my friends in England." The additions seem to have been principally to his "Theory of Language," and had been suggested by his study of Hebrew.

From the constant use of his eyes during the dark months, they had suffered so much that the doctor had threatened to forbid him the use of pen, ink, and paper. To rest them, he took the singular remedy of translating Pope's "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady" into Latin verse, though he owns that Major Mercer's and his own amusement was also an incitement to the work. A more effectual rest was afforded by a fortnight's stay at Gordon Castle. Writing from there to Dr. Porteus on the 7th of June, he says : "Summer now begins to appear among us, after such a long tract of severe weather as is not remembered by the oldest person alive. Till within these few days there were hardly any signs of vegetation in the remote and unsheltered parts of the country, where, of course, multitudes of cattle have perished, and many farmers are ruined. We are in hourly expectation of that Influenza which has been so troublesome at London and Edinburgh. One piece of news, however, arrived this morning which gives me great pleasure, and will, I am persuaded, be received with general satisfaction—I mean the miscarriage of the Scotch Militia Bill in the House of Commons. If it had passed, its consequences would have been ruinous in this country. By the by, I am surprised that any person, who knows the present state of Scotland, should ever wish for a Scotch militia. Our Fencible regiments are excellent troops ; and if their number were doubled this country would have all the internal defence that it has any occasion for. But our people, though they may be made good soldiers, could not easily be formed into a good

¹ The installation took place towards the end of May, and Mr. Gordon gave a dinner on the 31st.

militia. They have no idea of such a thing, and the circumstances of the greater part of them would make it impossible for them to learn their military exercises and mind their ordinary business at the same time."

No sooner had Beattie returned to Aberdeen than he was seized by an attack of Influenza, the effects of which in his case seem to have been as difficult to shake off as they are in the form of that complaint which has been so prevalent of late years. Beattie gives the following account of his attack to the Duchess of Gordon:—

"ABERDEEN,
"July 16th, 1782.

"It is now three weeks and six hours since I left Gordon Castle, and all this while I have been groaning and languishing. I knew immediately on coming home that I should not escape; the cold and damp air of this place, such a contrast to the sunny and balmy gales of Speyside, made me shiver in every nerve. Wishing, however, to be well, and consequently to fall sick as soon as possible, I no sooner felt the symptoms certain than I entered upon Dr. Munro's regimen, which I did not depart from in one particular. At the end of five days I went, with Dr. Livingstone's permission, to the country, where, though the air was good and the walks pleasant and dry, though there was profound tranquillity, and though trees did bud and fields were green, and broom bloomed fair to see, I grew no better, but worse. I was glad to get home again. I am now somewhat recovered, but still plagued with a headache and cough, which last I bear with the less patience because I have never been accustomed to it."

Towards the end of July, however, he was sufficiently recovered to be able to go to Edinburgh with the manuscripts of his Dissertations, which he left with Sir William Forbes to forward to Strahan, the publisher. He remained in Edinburgh till the middle of August, and on his journey both to and from Edinburgh he visited his relations at Montrose and Lawton.

He had heard while in Edinburgh that his early friend the Honourable Charles Boyd, then living in Edinburgh, was seriously ill, too ill, indeed, to permit of his being allowed to see him. On his return home, he found waiting him a letter from his widow, the second Mrs. Boyd, telling of his death and conveying to him the last messages of his friend. The first sentence of this letter, showing the strength of the friendship that existed between them, may be quoted: "Your regret, I am sure, will not be wanting when, in compliance with one of Mr. Boyd's requests, I inform you that he died on Saturday—died (to use his own expression) as much your friend as he had lived; esteeming you as a man, and as a companion preferring you beyond all others." Mrs. Boyd concludes her

letter with an earnest hope that, "in right of Charles," she "may be distinguished by some portion of your friendship—that is one of the earthly possessions to which I can never become indifferent."

During the autumn, Beattie, accompanied by Dr. Dun and his boy, paid a round of visits among his North-country friends, going as far as Fort George, and spending a few days at Gordon Castle on the way both to and from that point. Afterwards, he settled at Peterhead for the rest of the season.

When he returned to Aberdeen, it was to take up his abode in a larger house, not far from the small one in which he had spent the former winter. He made this change of residence to enable him to have Montagu under his own eye. Hitherto, from the circumstances of his home, the child had chiefly lived at the Manse of Durris, and his father had seen very little of him. As the boy was now four years of age, Beattie felt he could no longer allow this estrangement from him to continue, and having again secured the company of his niece for the winter, he gathered his little family together and settled down with more prospect of peace and comfort in his home than had been his lot for many years past.

Among Beattie's friends resident in Peterhead, Mr. Laing, clergyman there to a small congregation who belonged to the English Church as distinguished from the Scotch Episcopal, had been long known to him and befriended by him. Mr. Laing was a man of considerable ability, and of varied acquirements. Besides theology, he had studied medicine, and for many years had been practising with great success, though, having no degree, he never accepted a fee. Joined to those more solid acquirements he had a love and knowledge of music, which was another bond between himself and Beattie. His flock was small and the members of it by no means wealthy, so the income they could afford to give their clergyman was very inadequate for the support of a married man with an ever increasing family. Beattie had for some time been meditating on a plan of helping him. This was to prevail on his colleagues to grant him the degree of M.D., which he hoped would remove from Mr. Laing's mind all scruples as to accepting fees for his medical advice, and thus enable him to add largely to his income. Before Beattie left Peterhead this autumn, he had sounded Dr. Donaldson, the Professor of Medicine, on the subject, and had found him favourable.

A few days after his return to Aberdeen, while Beattie was engaged in prescribing the competition theme to the candidates for Bursaries, his colleagues met in another room, and when he joined them, after his work was over, they told him that the degree of Doctor of Medicine was unanimously conferred on Mr. Laing *as a present* from the college. "A degree," writes Beattie to his friend, "especially in medicine, conferred in this manner is so very rare

that in twenty years I cannot remember above two instances of it. It is therefore as honourable a testimony as Marischal College can give of their esteem for your character."

There are two letters from Principal Campbell written towards the close of this year. The first, in October, while Beattie was still in Peterhead, was occasioned by college business in connexion with the resignation of one of the Professors (Professor Kennedy) and the election of Mr. Stewart in his place. The Principal then goes on to speak of the MS. of his "Translation of the Gospels," which he had submitted to Beattie for criticism and emendation, particularly as to its style. He fears Beattie had found such "a deal of dry verbal criticism" but poor entertainment, and trusts that, by giving him such a task, he had not proved instrumental in retarding his recovery from the effects of influenza, adding:—

"I cannot say I suspect, for I am certain, you will find much inaccuracy of expression in the notes. In regard to the judgments passed in them, on the import of the text, I have weighed them as well as I could; and I hope they will not often be found erroneous; but it was hardly in my power to be at so much pains about the expression. I know there are some changes of words and phrases made in the translation itself, which must appear capricious to one unacquainted with my reasons. And for the chief of these you have only in the notes references to the 'Preliminary Dissertations.' I have now written about one-half of the proposed 'Dissertations'; and as I flatter myself they will not be so dry reading as what you have had in the notes, so neither will they require so much pains to enable one to form a judgment of them, as it requires to be able to judge of the justness of the version. But I hope soon to have an opportunity now of receiving your corrections."

On this subject, he writes again in December: "... I have been very busy since this day se'ennight, both in revising my manuscripts, with the help of your corrections, and in preparing for your revival the greater part of my 'Preliminary Dissertations.' I hope to be able to send you them on Saturday, when I propose to write to you more particularly. I shall only add at present that whatever estimation my performance shall be in with the public (if, indeed, it succeed at all), I shall owe no small share of it to the improvements it will have received from your accurate and judicious observation."¹

Writing as Lord Rector on the same college business as the Principal in his first letter, Mr. Baron Gordon remarks on passing events: "What think you of the times now! Our friend's remark is certainly just, *omnia fatis in pectus ruere et retro Sublapsa referri*; this anticipated independence of America is hard to digest. The

¹ Principal Campbell acknowledges his obligation to Dr. Beattie in the preface to his work.

speech sounds to me like the piteous concessions of a bankrupt ceding one-half of his estate to quiet the clamours of his creditors. Individuals, too, are withdrawing fast; Lord Kaimes's levity to all appearance will not avail him long; and Lord Monboddo told me he was reduced to the miserable necessity of sleeping with a fire in his room, and wearing a great-coat in foul weather, without daring either to anoint or to bathe; my remark was '*Invidiam placare paras virtute relicta?*'"

Writing to Mr. Williamson at Oxford, to introduce a son of Mr. Fraser, of Fraserfield, who was expecting an exhibition at Balliol College, Beattie mentions that a cheap edition of Dr. Horne's¹ letter to Adam Smith had been printed in Aberdeen and "is liked exceedingly in this country. There is such a demand that I believe there must be more editions."

The severe weather which Beattie had spoken of in the early part of the year had continued to characterize it throughout, and gained for it an evil notoriety, which long remained in the memory of the people, from the misery it entailed by the failure of the harvest, and the loss of cattle and sheep. "If you journeyed northward at the time you proposed, you must have had exceedingly bad weather, for such a week as the last I never saw at this season of the year, even in this country, of which it may truly be said sometimes, '*quod latus mundi Nebulæ malusque Jupiter urget.*'"

The weather had been equally bad in England. Mrs. Montagu, writing about the same time from Sandleford, said she had been prevented from week to week from setting out for Denton, by the weather, and had now given up all intention of going, as, instead of improving, the weather had gone from bad to worse. After raining for part of every day for a fortnight, it "began to rain all day long, and still continues to do so, with every menacing appearance of future bad weather."

In November, Beattie wrote: "The appearance of famine is general over all this country. In many parts the harvest has failed altogether, and in most parts there is not half a crop"; while his relative, Mrs. Wright, of Lawton, writing in December, sums up the character of the year as "the worst season and latest harvest ever known, attended by frost and snow."

¹ See page 177.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

TROUBLES, PUBLIC AND DOMESTIC.

Threatening of Famine and Riots—Stormy weather in Spring—Beattie goes more into company during the winter—Criticizes Principal Campbell's Works—Account of her godson to Mrs. Montagu—His nephew finishes his Course at College—Beattie applies for an Exchequer Bursary for him, for his Divinity Course—Gets a son of his sister, Mrs. Duira, a prisoner of war in Holland, released on his *parole*—Moves into a house close to the College Gate—Miss Valentine takes Montagu to Montrose for the Summer—Beattie and his son James go to Gordon Castle for two months—Characters of the Duke and Duchess of Gordon—James's diffidence—Gives up the idea of going to London and settles in Peterhead—Dissertations published in May and dedicated to the Marquis of Huntly—Letters from Friends thanking him for copies of his work—Elected an Ordinary Member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh—Letter from Lord William Gordon—At Lady Newhaven's request agrees to take a young Englishman as a boarder while attending Marischal College—Prevented from doing so by Mrs. Beattie's health—New phase of her illness.

THE inclement season of 1782 was followed by a winter of great scarcity among the poorer classes, which, it was feared, might lead to rioting.

In January, 1783, Beattie wrote to Mrs. Montagu: "We have been here, and still are, in great apprehensions of famine. Last summer was cold and tempestuous beyond imagination, and in many parts of the country there was little or no harvest. Oatmeal, without which our common people have no notion of supporting life, sells just now at double its usual price, and the people are murmuring, and anonymous letters in a threatening style have been sent to many persons."

On hearing that, in consequence of the peace just concluded, at the close of the American War of Independence, the authorities had decided on reducing the strength of the Fencibles, he writes in March to the Duchess of Gordon:—

"I hope our people of influence will have sense to solicit and interest to prevail with the Administration to let the Fencibles remain embodied till we have some prospect of plenty, for I am convinced it is the fear of the military only that keeps the mob from rising and doing infinite mischief. I must own they have cause to complain, for this town feels the present scarcity more than any other part of Scotland. We raised by subscription a considerable sum to encourage the importation of grain, but the matter was so managed that I believe it did more harm than good."

The New Year did not begin auspiciously. Early in March, the East Coast was visited by a very severe storm. Beattie's house stood where it commanded a fine view of the sea, and was in consequence so exposed to the fury of the gale that he was obliged to secure the windows which faced the east "with very strong nails," to prevent the sashes from being blown in.¹

He heard that part of the new pier at Peterhead had been destroyed by the storm, and, when writing to Dr. Laing to inquire if this were true, he gives the following description of the coast at Aberdeen, between the rivers Dee and Don, after the storm had partially subsided :—

"Such a storm has not been on this coast in my memory. As soon as I could with safety expose myself to the remains of it, I went to the beach, where even from the top of the sandhills I could see nothing on the sea but broken water. It was almost half ebb, and yet I could not pass between those hills and the sea, which beat against them with great violence, and in the space between the two rivers has forced itself into the links through ten or a dozen breaches. Such a storm five or six times repeated in the course of a winter would, I am persuaded, sweep all our sandhills away and transform the links into a naked beach of level sand. The loss in shipping is not so great as I apprehended it would be; one vessel was beat to pieces, and three more stranded within a quarter of a mile of the mouth of the Dee; but nobody was drowned, as far as I have heard."

For Beattie himself, this winter was one of comparative leisure and enjoyment. He says of himself: "I have been more idle and more in company² than I used to be, which the doctor tells me is good for my health." As to literary work, he had none of his own in hand except that of correcting the proofs of his *Dissertations* now passing through the press. On Principal Campbell's work, however, he must have bestowed great pains. He writes of it to Sir W. Forbes :—

"I have revised, with all the attention I am master of, Dr.

¹ This house probably does not now exist. It certainly was not in the Marischal College buildings: for, *there* Beattie never resided. There are only two houses in Aberdeen that an elder generation associated with Beattie. One of these was off the Upperkirkgate, with access through Drum's Lane: it was formerly the Dispensary. The other is the house in which Beattie died—lately Mr. Farquhar Spottiswood's Ragged School, now the General Dispensary. It was entered from the Guestrow, passing by an archway through a block of houses, behind which it was situated with a garden looking to the West.

² The Duke and Duchess of Gordon were in Aberdeen for some time this winter, and evidently had used their influence with Beattie to draw him out of the recluse life he had been for some time obliged to lead. They dined with him on Christmas Day; and to this time must belong the following undated note from the Duchess :—

"Pray, thou first of men—come to the Ball and make happy all the Gordons upon earth.

"Yours ever,
"J. GORDON."

Campbell's new translation of Matthew and Mark, with the notes upon it, and ten or twelve of his Preliminary Dissertations; and that this revisal has been the work of some time you will readily believe when I tell you that I have written of critical remarks not less than seventy or eighty quarto pages. Many of these, indeed, I thought of little moment; but as lovers before marriage are advised to be as quick-sighted and after marriage as blind as possible to one another's faults, so I consider it as my duty to be as captious as possible in the revisal of a friend's work before publication, and when it is published to be captious no longer. The Principal, however, is pleased to think more favourably than I do of my strictures, and tells me he has adopted nine-tenths of them. . . . The whole work will amount to two large quartos at least, and will, in my opinion, be one of the most important publications that has appeared in our time. It is really a treasure of theological learning, exact criticism, and sound divinity, and has given me more information, in regard to what may be called scriptural knowledge, than all the other books I have read."

At this time, also, Montagu occupied much of Beattie's attention. He wrote of him to his godmother in the beginning of the year:—

"Your little godson, who was all last summer in the country, returned home in October, and since that time has been under my own inspection, which, till now, the peculiar circumstances of my family did not permit him to be. I found him wild, and not very tractable, though not destitute either of affection or of generosity. He had been committed to the care of people who, it seems, thought it too soon to inure him to moral discipline. But as that part of education cannot, in my opinion, begin too early, I have been combating his evil habits with all the caution and steadiness I am master of, and my success has not been inconsiderable. I have taught him to fear my anger above everything, for he is too young to be impressed with any fears of a higher kind; and I find that the more he fears the more he loves me. His brother co-operates with me in this good work, and I hope we shall in time make him a very good boy. He is stout and healthy, and the picture of good-humour, and good cheer, and a very great favourite in the neighbourhood. Bodily correction I have never used as yet, considering it as a dangerous remedy which ought not to be had recourse to till all others have been tried and found ineffectual. My other boy is busy at his French and Greek; I thought him too young to go into the higher classes, and have made him study the elements of Greek a second time."

His nephew, James Beattie, finished his college course in the spring. In many ways Beattie amply repaid his brother David for his kind care of himself when a boy, perhaps in no more effectual way than in the care he took of and the assistance he gave to his

son. While at college, the boy had been always under his uncle's watchful eye, and at his expense had shared all his cousin's advantages of extra classes in French and fencing, while in more material ways all necessary help had been given. Beattie had the great satisfaction of finding the boy deserved and profited by all that was done for him. At the close of his college career, he chose the Church as his profession, and Beattie, on writing to Mr. Baron Gordon, to ask for an Exchequer bursary for him, a request readily granted, could give the following character of him :—

"The boy, notwithstanding his relation to me, I assure you I would not have recommended if I had not thought that he has more than ordinary merit. He is an excellent classical scholar, and particularly skilled in the Greek tongue. Of his manners you will form a judgment from this circumstance: that during the four years of his attendance at college he never was reprov'd or fined, he never was once absent, or *sero*. To all his masters he has always given the greatest satisfaction."

Beattie was also at this time using his influence in behalf of another nephew, the son of his sister, Mrs. Daira. The vessel in which this young man had been sailing¹ had been captured by the Dutch, and the crew imprisoned. Through a friend in Rotterdam, Beattie obtained his release on *parole* before the conclusion of the peace, which soon after restored the young man to liberty.

It was well for Beattie's health that the winter was one of comparative leisure and relaxation, for he still felt the effects of his last year's attack of influenza. He managed to get through the labours of the session without assistance; but he found that his new house, though in every other respect an agreeable residence, was too far from the college, to which he had to go three times a day; so, during the spring, he moved into another within a stone's throw of the college gate.²

Having made this arrangement, and seeing Miss Valentine and Montagu safely settled in Montrose for the summer, he gladly availed himself of an invitation for himself and James to Gordon Castle. There he remained for two months, deriving great benefit from the milder climate of Speyside, which almost cured him of rheumatism that had been so severe, particularly in his arms, that at one time he had feared they were becoming paralyzed.

While the climate did him much good, "the conversation of the Duke and Duchess did me still more." This he writes to the Hon. Mrs. Boyd, and goes on to say of these friends :—

"Your sentiments of the Duchess are perfectly just. I have had

¹ In what circumstances, whether as a sailor or a passenger, does not appear.

² Of this move he writes to the Duchess of Gordon: "I shall pay a great rent, and quit a magnificent and amusing prospect; but quiet is worth a few pounds, and health must not be sacrificed to the amusement of fancy."

The "great" rent was £28 a year; he had been paying £23 18s.

the honour to know her long, and I think I know her well. A perfect character I have never yet met with ; but of her I will venture to say that the more it is known the more it will be admired, and that nothing but prejudice, or envy, or ignorance, or pure malice, can be insensible of its worth. The Duke, though more inclined to a retired life, is in no respect inferior. I have never known a man of a sounder judgment, of more acute parts, or of a more candid and benevolent temper ; and in the company of people whom he knows, there cannot be a more facetious, a more cheerful, or a more agreeable associate. His passion for astronomy and other parts of science, his abhorrence of drinking and gaming, and his attachment to his children, keep him at a distance from the dissipations of high life, and give him in the eyes of some people an appearance of reserve ; but that wears off entirely when one becomes acquainted with him."

Meantime, James's diffidence prevented his enjoying the visit as he might have done, for every one was kind and attentive to him. His father was surprised that, having seen so much company of all ranks when he was in London, he had not yet acquired more self-possession. But finding neither his advice nor the boy's own efforts did any good, he wisely ceased to urge him, trusting that as he got older he would conquer his timidity. He was, however, very quietly happy, learning to shoot, reading half a book of Homer, and picking up a curious epigram¹ for his grandfather's amusement.

The improvement in Beattie's health did not continue long after his return home. The weather became cold and stormy, and brought back his rheumatic pains and a feeling of great lassitude and weariness. He went to Montrose to see Montagu and spent a few days with Mr. Gordon, of Cluny, after which he had intended going to London by sea, thinking the sea voyage would do him good ; but this had to be given up as he felt unable "to get up a ship's side, far less to endure the noise, the company, and the other inconveniences of a salmon smack." In these circumstances, he resolved to go no farther from home than Peterhead, where he spent the rest of the summer and autumn.

Beattie's new book had been published in London in the end of May. It was entitled "Dissertations, Moral and Critical," and was dedicated to the Marquis of Huntly, as his hope was that it might be useful to the young.

¹ The epigram was composed in Italian, French, Latin, English, and broad Scotch. It had been written on the window of an inn :—

"In questa casa troverete,
Tout ce que l'on peut souhaiter,
Vinum, panem, pisces, carnes,
Coaches, chaises, horses, harness,
Coal an' can'le, wife and bairnies."

He was always liberal in gifts of his works to old patrons and friends, and during June and July he received many letters of thanks, from a few of which the following extracts are taken :—

FROM THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

"HARTLEBURY CASTLE,

"July 10th, 1783.

"I have now read them (the Dissertations) with some care, and have been greatly entertained with them. The morality is everywhere so pure, and the criticism so just, that I have seldom read any discourses of this sort with more pleasure. Your 'Theory of Language' shows with what care you have studied that nice subject, and fully accounts for the purity, correctness and elegance of your own writings."

After urging that Beattie should publish his lectures "at large":

". . . But the re-establishment of your health is, or should be, your first care. And if in the course of the summer or at any other time you should think it might contribute to that end to visit your friends in England, I should be very happy to see you in this place, where you would find books, and leisure, and a good air, and the most sincere welcome."

FROM LORD HAILES.

"NEWHAILES,

"June 14th, 1783.

"I return you my best thanks for your present which I received this day. You may well suppose that I cannot have *read* much of it, but I have *dipped* enough into it to see that it will afford much information and pleasure on a careful perusal. . . . To show you that I have not *dipped* in vain I will give you a specimen of observations. You praise Marivaux justly; his own countrymen were so niggard in their praise, or so hard in their censures, that he, the mildest and gentlest creature in the world, laid aside his pen. He told Monsieur de Fouterelle that he had sketched his whole story of 'Marianne' before he set about writing it, and that it was a great mistake to suppose that he had stopped short because he could not extricate Marianne and Valoille from the situation into which he had brought them. There are few books of entertainment so unexceptionable as 'Marianne,' and I know none in English.

"The 'Paysan Parvenu' has more wit and variety, but it cannot be recommended to young people. There is no scene in it without a moral, but the description hides the moral in more places than one. You don't censure the indelicacies of Fielding with sufficient severity; his indelicacies are generally the dullest parts of his work. His knowledge of human nature was not from a sort of intuition

or moral sensibility as Shakespeare's, but merely from acute observation ; hence whenever he wanders into genteel company he loses himself. Shakespeare, on the contrary, is at home in every company. I think that in some particulars you do not full justice to Le Sage. Le Sage is no favourer of cheats and sharpers ; like Gay, he has made his sharper (Don Raphael) gallant and brave, but he does not, like Gay, give him a reprieve ; on the contrary he brings him to a cruel and ignominious death. Gil Blas is not a rogue in his own person, but an associate with rogues in high and low life. When he does right he is the chief character ; he is one who thinks right, but from the concurrence of circumstances, acts wrong. In him we see almost every folly exemplified, in which youth and self-conceit can entangle one. Read 'Gil Blas' over again, and you will see more delicate satire in it and more good sense and morals than you ever did."

FROM LORD BUCHAN.

" KIRKHILL,
" June 16th, 1783.

"I have just now had the pleasure of receiving from your bookseller at Edinburgh the 'Dissertations, Moral and Critical,' which you have done me the honour of placing on my shelves with your other works formerly bestowed on one who knows the value of them and of their author. . . . I will not pay you any of those trite compliments which are paid so commonly to authors, and which, as they express a great deal too much, mean in general a great deal too little ; but I do assure you with the greatest sincerity that I have found myself always edified and improved by your writings, and that I think of you often with that affection and respect which our early acquaintance and the uniform tendency of your writings and professional labours inspired.

"It would give me great pleasure (mixed, perhaps, with some degree of vanity), if I should have reason to believe that my friendship and approbation could administer any comfort or complacency to a man who has employed his brightest, as well as his most gloomy, days in the practice and promotion of Christian philosophy, and of the most useful of all sciences, the knowledge of ourselves."

Mr. Baron Gordon writes that he thinks the thoughts in those of the Dissertations he has read are not "so involved in the mazes of science, but that they may be introduced into any elegant or serious conversation without the show of superiority or affectation, and I have long been of opinion that such compositions, besides improving the heart, contribute more than any other to the enjoyment of company and social intercourse." He is particularly charmed with the style, and with regard to it, he adds : " Monboddo praises the dedication wonderfully ; I know not what sentiments

he may express when he discovers that you call in question the credibility of the Swedish navigator who asserts that in the island of Nicobar he saw men with tails like cats."

Mr. Scot, of Amwell, in his letter of thanks and appreciation, gives his opinion of the literary taste of the day :—

"June 6th, 1783.

"We have had scarce any poetry published this season. Nor is there much encouragement to publish ; there are few readers, and of those few, three parts of four do not know good from bad. Indeed, my dear friend, the prevailing taste in polite literature, at least in poetry, is wretched ; classical simplicity is resigned for Gothic affectation, and writers who in the time of Addison and Pope would have been honoured with a place in the *Bathos* or the *Dunciad*, are applauded and held up as the standards of excellence by the superficial and ignorant periodical critics of the day. Dr. Johnson's biographical criticism, in his account of the English poets, has done much mischief. He is a good prose writer, a good moralist, and a good poet, and yet, strange to tell, he is either a very incompetent judge of poetry, or else he suffers his prejudices to operate against and overpower his judgment. Witness his condemnation of Milton's '*Lycidas*' and Gray's two Odes, the last whereof is superior to any in our language, Dryden's noble Music Ode not excepted. On this last subject (Gray's Odes), our worthy friend, Mr. Potter, has entered into a controversy with Dr. Johnson in a pamphlet, just published, ornamented with a head of Gray, from an original drawing, which gives me the idea of a man of superior genius, an idea I never could have received from the engraving prefixed to Mason's editions of his works."

Mr. Potter writes that he had not had time yet to read the "*Dissertations* only in cutting open the leaves. I observe the very handsome manner in which you speak of the translation of '*Æschylus*' ; commendations from you is the highest honour a writer can receive ; I most thankfully acknowledge your kindness, but glory more in that you own me for your friend. I am ambitious of presenting you with a *petite* piece on Dr. Johnson's observations on the Odes of Gray, which was published the day after I left town. I am principally induced to trouble you with this, for the sake of sending you an engraved head of Gray ; the drawing was taken, *de vivo*, by a very ingenious young man, one of my pupils at Cambridge. Mr. Gray knew it not. The etching is very accurately done . . . Alas, I did not know Mr. Gray ; but Mrs. Montagu tells me that the print is very like him."

Some months afterwards, he wrote : "I beg the favour of you to give me your opinion of my translation of '*Euripides*.' Many readers are offended at not finding in it the fire of '*Æschylus*,' and

think that I am grown tame and spiritless ; but I wish to know the opinion of those who can judge of the different genius and colouring of the two poets. . . . I thank you for your kind reception of my observations on Dr. Johnson. The public received the pamphlet very graciously ; he has been told of it, but is unconcerned at it, and pertinaciously refuses to read it ; no matter. He is not made of penetrable stuff ; he is a very singular character, his virtue entitles him to high commendation, but good manners might have made his good morals more amiable. I think not highly of his learning, but very highly of his understanding ; as a critic, he is to be read with caution, his strong sense often directs him right, he is then great, but his prejudices often mislead his judgment ; in his temper he is benevolent, in his life charitable, even to an extreme, in his writings he is sour, contemptuous, and malignant. With these faults if he had not great virtues, he would be insufferable ; with these virtues if he had not great faults he would be highly respectable, nay, with all his faults he must be respected."

There is an affectionate letter from his old friend, Dr. Blacklock, thanking Beattie for the notice of his works contained in the "Dissertations." "Favours of this kind have been so seldom done me by my contemporaries, that when proceeding from a person of your eminence, in the republic of letters they could hardly fail to have their full effect upon the person obliged." He concludes his letter by mentioning a pamphlet just published on a subject which only in recent years has assumed the prominence which more than a hundred years ago Dr. Blacklock considered was due to it.

"This will be delivered you by Mr. Anderson, of Monkshill, who is, I believe, your acquaintance. He has lately published a pamphlet on the cultivation of a branch of commerce whose importance can be measured by nothing but our negligence of it, or by the abortive, because unskilful, attempts which have been made to pursue it—I mean the Fishery on our coasts."¹

In June, it was intimated to Beattie that he had been elected an ordinary member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and he was requested to intimate to the secretary, Professor John Robinson,

¹ In Major Mercer's appreciative letter after reading Beattie's work, he gives the following whimsical account of the fears of the people of Aberdeen on account of the state of the weather : "The strange state of the weather for some time past, has afforded much speculation and trepidation to the good people here. They dream of nothing but earthquakes. The thunder and lightning are, in general, attributed to the hocus pocus tricks which Professor Copland has lately been playing at the Observatory and elsewhere. It is affirmed that he has drawn all this mischief out of the clouds by means of the Black Art, and that he has loaded his electrical batteries for purposes best known to himself. The mob are greatly incensed against him ; the very women would surely attack him in the streets were it not for a small vial of electrical matter which he is said to carry about in his pocket for present use, and which he can discharge upon a minute's warning."

whether he chose to be received into the Society, and if so, with which of its classes, Physical or Literary, he desired to be associated. Beattie has written on the outside of the letter, "Answered and signified my acceptance, and desired to be associated with the Literary class."

In the autumn of this year, Beattie had much renewed anxiety on Mrs. Beattie's account. During the summer her bodily health had improved greatly, and this had been accompanied by a seemingly equal improvement in her mental condition; so much so that it was thought by her physician that all that was wanting to perfect her cure was that she should be restored to her family. At the same time, however, he counselled that some little delay should occur after she had been told of this intended change, to see what effect it would have upon her. Fortunately, this advice was followed, as on the very day before she was to have gone home her mental malady returned in a violent form, such as it had never before assumed.

As it was impossible, in these circumstances, that she should return to his home, Beattie prevailed on her father to allow her to remain with him during the winter, after which, on the conclusion of the College Session, he would be at leisure to look out for some suitable abode for her.

The sorrow, anxiety and perplexity which the correspondence shows that Beattie passed through at this time may well be supposed, but need not be dwelt upon. It is pleasanter to record that the kindness shown him by his friends helped to cheer him under his heavy affliction; and to none was he more indebted at this time for sympathy and wise counsel than to Principal Campbell and the Duchess of Gordon.¹

Beattie's health, already far from good, was not improved by the agitation he had gone through; yet, in writing to Mrs. Montagu in the end of the year, he could give a more cheerful account of his home and prospects for the future than could have been expected: "Myself and my little family I have committed to the care of a niece of mine, who is a cheerful and sensible young woman, exceedingly attached to me and my two boys, who are equally fond of her. She does everything in her power to please and amuse me. Indeed the present state of my little household is so much to my mind that if I could keep it as it is, and enjoy a few months' tranquillity, I should not despair of recovering such a degree of strength as might again enable me to be of some little use in the world."

¹ A great deal has been said and written of this celebrated Duchess, of her wit, her gaiety, and her beauty; but of her kindness of heart, readiness to help, of the strength and delicacy of her friendship, we hear too little. Her letters to Beattie during those months of sorrow show her to have been a true, wise, and tender friend—a character she could not have assumed merely towards him.

1784.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEATTIE AND HIS ELDER SON VISIT LONDON.

Prepares the "Minstrel" and other Poems for another edition—Asks Mrs. Montagu to allow the volume to be inscribed to her, and to permit her name to be inserted in the last stanza of the First Book of the "Minstrel"—Pinkerton urges him to complete the "Minstrel"—Serious thoughts of settling in England with his boys—Letters of sympathy from Mr. Fraser Douglas—Cowper's Letters on Beattie—Asked to write an Essay for the Literary Branch of the Royal Society of Edinburgh—Elected an Honorary Member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester—Beattie and his family leave Aberdeen; he and James for Edinburgh, Miss Valentine and Montagu for Montrose—With the assistance of Sir W. Forbes, arranges a home for Mrs. Beattie at Musselburgh—Meets Mrs. Siddons at Lord Buchan's—Goes to London by sea as far as Yarmouth, then posts to London—Johnson and Sir J. Reynolds—Visits the Bishop of Chester at Hunton—Good reports of Mrs. Beattie—Miss Gregory's marriage to Mr. Alison—Visits Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford—Leaves London in the end of August for Temple Newsam, in Yorkshire—Remains there nine days—Stops at Montrose to allow his boys to be together—Goes to Peterhead—Persuades Mrs. Arbuthnot to accept a pension from Mrs. Montagu—Beattie consults Mrs. Montagu whether he should retain his house, or board himself and his boys in a family—Correspondence with Lord Hailes, Lord Elliot, etc.

DURING the winter of 1783-1784, Beattie corrected and revised the "Minstrel," and the few poems he chose to print along with it, for a new edition, which Dilly had told him was wanted. While doing so, as he thought, for the last time, he asked Mrs. Montagu's permission to inscribe the volume to her, and also to insert her name in the last stanza of the first book of the "Minstrel," as he had inserted that of their common friend, Dr. Gregory, in the last stanza of the second book. "It would give me," he wrote, "no little pleasure to see in the same poem the names of Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Gregory—two persons so dear to me, and who had so sincere a friendship for one another. Besides, Madam, I beg leave to put you in mind that the first book of the poem was published at his desire, and the second at yours, so that I have more reasons than one for making this request. When this affair is settled, and the volume revised once more, I bid adieu to poetry for ever."

This resolve excites no surprise in those to whom the history of Beattie's private life is known. The anxieties of his married life had been such as early to quench all the lighter flights of fancy, and to disinclose him for any but graver studies, and those more immediately connected with the instruction of the young under his charge. But this was not generally known to his contemporaries,

and keen regret was often expressed that the "Minstrel" remained an unfinished poem. On this occasion, when it became known to Pinkerton that a new edition of the "Minstrel" was preparing, he wrote to Beattie :—

" KNIGHTSBRIDGE, No. 3 (NEAR LONDON),

" March 20th, 1784.

"It is with the most sincere pleasure that I am informed of your intention of republishing the 'Minstrel,' with additions. That exquisite poem I peculiarly interest myself in, because from it I first derived any little taste I may have in poetry, and never read it without the highest delight. I hope, therefore, you will pardon my resuming a correspondence which I am so proud of to express sentiments of the most zealous friendship. Impelled by these sentiments, I must express my regret that so fine a poem should remain unfinished when another canto of sixty stanzas might do the business. If your fame as a poet does not move you, for a perfect poem must ever be allowed superior to an imperfect one, even of superior merits, let me entreat this of you, in the name of the public, as a moral philosopher. Cicero would have put it without scruple into his book 'De Officiis,' as a duty which you owe to your friends, to the public, and to yourself.

"If I might, with the utmost respect, express my poor sentiments about your alterations in the second canto, the stanzas which regard the progress of science, and those which praise Homer and Virgil, seem somewhat independent of your design ; for no minstrel was ever acquainted with these subjects, or if one real instance might occur, though it might be true, it is not probable.

"I frequently heard objections to these parts by the warmest admirers of the rest of the poems, among whom I shall ever rank myself."

No favourable response was given to Pinkerton's appeal—an appeal he would scarcely have made could he have guessed Beattie's circumstances. The uncertainty in which at this time he was living as to what might happen, in any sudden access of Mrs. Beattie's malady, kept him in constant anxiety and dread, so much so, that he had serious thoughts of giving up his Professorship, and of settling in England with his boys, fearing there was no other way by which he could secure for them and himself a quiet home. Fortunately, no such extreme measure proved necessary, as he was able, during the summer, to make an arrangement for Mrs. Beattie which for some time proved satisfactory. Among the many marks of sympathy and kindness shown him by those friends who were aware of the dark hour he was passing through, there is a long letter from his old friend Mr. Fraser Douglas, to whom he had written despondingly, and whose reply, from which a few sentences may be extracted,

must have done much to cheer and encourage him. He reminds him :—

“ABBOTT INCH,
“February 25th, 1784.

“You have borne for years a very heavy affliction with the temper and dignity which became your station and character. Bear up, therefore, with your usual fortitude, and say unto God, with the great exemplar of patience, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’ Be assured He will not lay upon you above what you are able, for all his corrections have a merciful and benign intention.

“I am conscious that I write to one much my superior in knowledge, but it is to one my junior by many years. Perhaps I write the more feelingly that I have drunk the dregs of the cup of affliction in several periods of my life, yet, on recollection, I can scarce wish it had been otherwise. After all, I am well aware that this conclusion would afford good entertainment to the gay and polite, who, with a gentle, following breeze, sail softly down the stream of time. A fair landing to them! Let the world be governed by its own maxims, but God forbid that you or I should despise the comforts of religion, which are the chief solace of human life, the good man’s chief joy.”

It seems strange that, at this time, when Beattie was so low in spirits and in such distress of mind, his writings were making a pleasant impression on Cowper. Little did this sorely tried poet guess that the man he was writing of was a brother in affliction, arising from causes very different from those which produced his own unhappiness.

In writing to the Rev. William Unwin, April 5th, 1784, he says :—

“I thanked you in my last for Johnson; I now thank you with more emphasis for Beattie, the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with; the only author I have seen whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination that makes even the driest subject, and the leanest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease, too, that his own character appears in every page; and, which is very rare, we see not only the writer, but the man, and that man so gentle, so well tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him, if any one has any sense of what is lovable. If you have not his poem called the ‘Minstrel,’ and cannot borrow it, I must beg you to buy it for me; for though I cannot afford to deal largely in so expensive a commodity as books, I must afford to purchase, at least, the poetical works of Beattie.”

And to the Rev. John Newton he writes :—

"April 26th, 1784.

"I have been lately employed in reading Beattie and Blair's Lectures. The latter I have not yet finished. I find the former the most agreeable of the two, and, indeed, the most entertaining writer, upon dry subjects, that I ever met with. His imagination is highly poetical, his language easy and elegant, and his manner so familiar, that we seem to be conversing with an old friend on terms of the most social intercourse while we read him. In Blair we find a scholar; in Beattie both a scholar and an amiable man, and, indeed, so amiable that I have wished for his acquaintance ever since I read his book."

In January of this year, the secretaries of the Royal Society of Edinburgh¹ wrote to inform Beattie that the Literary class of that Society hoped he would soon favour them with an Essay on any subject relating to antiquities, philology, or literature. And, in February, the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester informed him, by their secretary, that he had been elected one of their honorary members as a testimony of their high esteem for his literary character. They added they would at all times receive with pleasure any communication from him on subjects which came within their rules, in which are included all literary and philosophical subjects except religion or British politics. The diploma of this Society was forwarded to Beattie in March by Dr. Thomas Percival (who was mainly instrumental in founding the Society), accompanied by a hope that Beattie might visit Manchester, and afford him the satisfaction of becoming "personally acquainted with one for whose talents and character I entertain the most unfeigned respect."

In April, Beattie set out from Aberdeen, and after remaining a few days at Montrose, where he left Miss Valentine and Montagu, he and James visited his relatives at Lawton, and then went on to Edinburgh. There he made a long stay, finding himself "among a great number of good friends who do everything in their power to raise my spirits."

It was then that, assisted by Sir William Forbes, he made an arrangement for Mrs. Beattie's being boarded at Musselburgh, in the house and under the care of a lady: while during her residence there Sir W. Forbes kept watch over her. That she went there shortly after Beattie left Edinburgh we learn from a letter to Sir W. Forbes, written from Kent in July :—

"I sit down to thank you for your two last letters, which came to hand the day before I left town. It is so far fortunate that

¹ Alexander Fraser Tytler and Andrew Dalziel.

Mrs. B.'s removal to Musselburgh was attended with so little inconvenience. My confidence in your friendship and goodness entirely satisfies me that you will soon put matters on a right footing. I lament, indeed, that your attention to me and mine should give you so much trouble ; but the consciousness of doing good to the unfortunate and forlorn will in part reward you. No mind ever possessed that consciousness in a more exquisite degree than yours has reason to do."

Of the many things in Edinburgh which had interested him, and helped to divert his thoughts from his sorrows, Beattie writes to Miss Valentine :—

"EDINBURGH,
"May 28th, 1784.

"Many interesting events have happened since I have been here, and if I had time I could write a monstrous long letter of news. The election of Scotch peers ; the meeting of Parliament ; the state of parties ; the old and new ministry ; Pitt and Fox ; the General Assembly—all these things are now forgotten—and nothing here is spoken or thought of but Mrs. Siddons. I have seen this wonderful person, not only on the stage, but in private company, for I passed two days with her at the Earl of Buchan's. Her powers in tragedy are, beyond comparison, great. I thought my old friend Garrick fell little or nothing short of theatrical perfection, and I have seen him in his prime and in his highest characters ; but Garrick never affected me half so much as Mrs. Siddons has done. Indeed, the heart that she cannot subdue must be made of other materials than flesh and blood. In the *Caledonian Mercury* you will see, from time to time, some critical observations on her account, which are very well written. The encomiums are high, but I assure you they are not above her merit. James, too, has seen her, and is transported. He never till now, he says, knew what acting was. It was very difficult to procure places, but by the kind attentions of the Duchess of Gordon and Lord and Lady Buchan, I was nobly accommodated, and in the very best seats in the house. In private company Mrs. Siddons is a modest, unassuming, sensible woman, of the gentlest and most elegant manners. Her moral character is not only unblemished, but exemplary. She is above the middle size, and, I suppose, about thirty-four years of age. Her countenance is the most interesting that can be, and excepting the Duchess of Gordon's, the most beautiful I have ever seen. Her eyes and eyebrows are of the deepest black. She loves music, and is fond of the Scotch tunes, many of which I played to her on the violoncello. One of them ('She rose and let me in,' which you know is a favourite of mine), made the tears start from her eyes. 'Go on,' she said to me, 'and you will soon have your revenge,' meaning that I would draw as many tears from her as she had drawn from me. She sang

'Queen Mary's Complaint' to admiration, and I had the honour to accompany her on the bass."¹

Beattie and his son left Edinburgh for London early in June. As on a former occasion his health had been improved by a sea voyage, Dr. Livingstone advised his trying the same remedy again, only regretting that the voyage would be of such short duration.

Lovers of the "good old times" may already have remarked how much anxiety Beattie might have been spared had the treatment of diseases of the brain been then better understood, and places for the reception and judicious and kind care of patients in Mrs. Beattie's state been provided. His experiences on his voyage from Leith to Yarmouth afford another proof that these "old times" were capable of being and have been improved. This is his account of the voyage :—

"On Sunday the 6th June at seven in the evening we embarked on board a ship in Leith road, and on Sunday the 13th at the same hour, finding the accommodation in the ship intolerably bad, and even pernicious to health, we landed at Yarmouth where we passed the night."

From Yarmouth they posted to London, which they reached in the afternoon of the 16th. There they remained for a month, during which time Beattie had the pleasure of renewing his intercourse with his many friends. He dined with Sir Joshua Reynolds the day after his arrival, and again, shortly after, on a Sunday, where Paoli, Johnson, and Boswell were of the company. Johnson had recently recovered from an illness, "but has the look of decline. Wine, I think, would do him good, but he cannot be prevailed on to drink it. He has, however, a voracious appetite for food. I verily believe that on Sunday last, he ate as much to dinner as I have done in all for these ten days past."

On another day, Beattie sat an hour with Johnson, "who sympathised with my situation" (with regard to his wife) "in a way that did honour to his feelings."

Sir Joshua's picture of Mrs. Siddons was new to Beattie, and his late intercourse with her made him a good judge of the truthfulness of its representation. He speaks of it as "one of the greatest efforts of the pencil," and says Sir Joshua agreed with him that she resembled Garrick in her countenance.

¹ In the correspondence, there is the following note from Lord Buchan :—

"WRITERS' COURT,

"May 25th, 1784.

"DEAR SIR,—Mrs. Siddons sits for her portrait for Lady Buchan on Monday and dines with us, where you are expected. She will probably come for the sitting at two o'clock, and the Serenata of Scottish music will not fail to improve the Portrait. My brother is to be of the party, and will bring his violin with him."

He found that Cadell was well pleased with the sale of his last quarto, containing his *Dissertations*, the first edition, though numerous, being almost sold off.¹

The July heat of London became so oppressive that Beattie left earlier than he had intended, and before he had seen all his friends, to pay a long visit to Dr. Porteus, in his beautiful parsonage of Hunton, near Maidstone.

The month he spent there he afterwards wrote of as "the happiest of his life," and we may well imagine how he felt it to be so. He was relieved for the time from all overwhelming anxiety about Mrs. Beattie, and he found in Dr. Porteus a friend already interested in his sorrows, to whom he could now confide all with a fulness and freeness impossible through the medium of letters. He received from him commendation of his own conduct, approval of all that had been done for Mrs. Beattie, and strength and encouragement "by such advices as one would expect from his good sense and knowledge of the world." We can fancy Beattie gratefully giving himself up to the soothing influences of the beauty, richness and tranquillity of the country and of the congenial society by which he was surrounded, and feeling, by the contrast to his previous state of misery, happiness of a kind and depth such as he had never before experienced.

The continued good reports of Mrs. Beattie which he received from Sir W. Forbes, helped in the healing of both his mind and his body. In reply to one of Sir William's letters, he says:—

"HUNTON,
"July 31st, 1784.

"Your last letter having given me the fullest assurance that the unfortunate object of our attention is now in circumstances as comfortable as her condition will admit of, I have been endeavouring to relieve my mind, for a time at least, from that load of anxiety which has so long oppressed it; and I already feel the happy consequence of this endeavour—my health is greatly improved."

Of the influences that contributed to the healing of his mind he also speaks in this letter and in one to Lord Hailes. He writes of the tranquillity and beauty, the peace and plenty, of this charming country "being a continual feast to his imagination"; while the kindness of his host and hostess, and the atmosphere of their home, which he describes as "the mansion of piety and cheerfulness and peace,"² soothed his mind and improved his heart.

¹ He mentions that the Duke of Gordon had been in London for a few days, to kiss hands on being made an English peer by the title of the Earl of Norwich, to which title he had a sort of hereditary right, as being the lineal descendant, and Beattie thought, also, the representative, of the last person who bore it.

² In Sir W. Forbes's "Life," there is a letter of Beattie's, in which he describes the beautiful and simple life led in the Parsonage more fully.

Of the Bishop, he adds : " His parishioners and his neighbours not only admire, but imitate his virtues. I never saw more devotion in any other church than his, nor so much happiness in any other parish."

To his niece he writes of the kindness of the Bishop and Mrs. Porteus in endeavouring to divert his mind from sorrowful thoughts : " They do everything in their power to amuse and entertain me. Every day we are making some one excursion or another ; and in the neighbourhood I find many agreeable people, with some of whom I was formerly acquainted in London. We dine to-day with Sir Charles Middleton, and are (I am told) to have music and a turtle feast. Lady Middleton is highly accomplished both as a musician and as a painter. Our next neighbour, whom we see every day, is Lady Twisden, who, though possessed of beauty, great fortune, and the finest accomplishments, and not more than twenty-five years of age, has ever since the death of her husband, Sir Roger, which happened four years ago, lived in this retirement, and employed herself in the education of her only daughter. In this neighbourhood also lives Sir David Lindsay, who was formerly a particular friend of mine, and whom I intend to visit in a few days. He is Lord Mansfield's nephew, and a general in the army."

On leaving Hunton about the middle of August, Beattie and his son went to Sandleford to visit Mrs. Montagu. With her they found her nephew, over whose education she had so carefully watched, and who seems by his character and conduct to have fully repaid her for this care. Beattie says of him that he found him to be " just what I wished and what I expected him to be. He is as good as I wish him to be, and I hope he will always be as happy."

Both the house and the grounds of Sandleford had been much improved since Beattie's last visit there. The house had formerly been a priory, and an old chapel stood at the distance of about thirty yards from it. For a century or more this chapel had been neglected or used as a place for lumber, so Mrs. Montagu must have thought it no desecration to transform it into what now formed a noble drawing-room of an elliptical shape, which she had joined to the house by a colonnade. In the grounds, buildings and garden walls had been removed, and the lawn opened up on every side ; while the waters of a little stream had been collected into two large and beautiful pieces of water, round which walks and grounds had been laid out to great advantage.

Beattie's stay at Sandleford was but short, as he had various engagements to fulfil in London before turning his face homewards, which he was now anxious to do.

The travellers left London the last day of August, and posted to Yorkshire, where they remained on a visit to Lady Irvine and her son-in-law, Lord William Gordon, at Temple Newsam, for nine days,

and then left for Edinburgh. The journey from London Beattie describes as being very pleasant. "The weather was uncommonly fine, and the gay harvest scenes that everywhere surrounded me conveyed such ideas of vivacity and gladness as could not fail to have the happiest effects upon my health and spirits, and I was surprisingly recovered before I got to Temple Newsam."

Of his journey homewards we hear nothing further till he writes to Miss Valentine from Montrose on September 22nd :—

"MY DEAR NIECE,

"When I left Edinburgh two days ago, it was my settled purpose to pass the night at Lawton. But I met with so many disappointments by the way in not finding chaises at the stages, and I was misled by so many pieces of strange information (which I shall explain to you when we meet) that I could not execute my purpose, at which I assure you I have been vexed exceedingly. When I arrived here about an hour ago and understood that you and Montagu had not yet returned from Lawton, it was such a disappointment that Jamie actually shed tears. I must therefore beg that you and he will come to Montrose by the chaise the bearer brings for you. Bean says he is a sober, attentive man, and may safely be trusted. I must be in Aberdeen on Saturday next, but I shall expect to see you here on Friday afternoon. Tell Montagu that his brother has brought for him from London a whole boxful of curious things."

Beattie must have prolonged his stay in Montrose beyond what he had intended, to allow the brothers being longer together, as Mrs. Montagu writes to him : "I thank you for setting before me the charming picture of fraternal love in the meeting of Mr. Beattie and my godson. You surely did wisely as well as kindly in prolonging their interview. In hearts young and tender as theirs, and of so fine metal, the impression made on that occasion will be too deep to be obliterated by the hand of time. I have often seen parents too little attentive to the cultivation of their affections in their children. It is indeed, too usual to see brothers, when the interests of the world engage them, neglect and forget the reciprocal duties for a time ; but as the passions decline, the affections revive, and in the latter part of life a man returns to the society of his family after various disappointments in other connections, as the traveller from dangerous and wearisome adventures in foreign countries to his native land, rejoicing in the accents of his mother tongue, and to fall again into the habits of his earlier years."

Three days after his return to Aberdeen, Beattie left for Peterhead. He was impatient to arrive there, for it was at this time he was commissioned by Mrs. Montagu to endeavour to prevail on his old friend, Mrs. Arbuthnot, to accept a small annuity from her. How

tactfully he fulfilled the commission and accomplished its object he relates at length to Mrs. Montagu.

On arriving at Peterhead, he had gone at once to the old lady, who was delighted to see him, the more so as his arrival was unexpected. She had not even heard of his return to Scotland. She was sitting at her solitary fireside occupied as usual with her book and work, "both of which she has the art of attending to at the same time." After the first greetings, Beattie said if she were at leisure he had a story to tell her, and proceeded to give the particulars of a conversation he had had at Sandleford with Mrs. Montagu, of which she and her aunt, Mrs. Cockburn, the widow of an Episcopalian clergyman in Aberdeen, and an authoress, had been the subject. Mrs. Arbuthnot was much affected by the interest Mrs. Montagu had shown in her aunt and pleased as to her minute inquiries as to herself; but Beattie gave no hint as to what was to follow. "At last when I found that her heart was thoroughly warmed, and recollecting your observation that the human heart in that state becomes malleable, I hastened to the conclusion, which I expressed in the simplest and fewest words possible, so that the whole struck her at one and the same instant. She attempted an exclamation, but it was inarticulate; the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks, and she could only say 'Oh dear, I cannot speak one word!' 'But hear me a little further,' I said; and then I told her, Madam, that such acts of beneficence were familiar things to you, and mentioned some instances that had come to my knowledge. She held up her eyes and hands, sometimes in silent adoration of Providence, and sometimes with expressions of deep gratitude to her benefactress. In a word, Madam, she accepted your bounty in a way that did honour both to her understanding and to her feelings; and I left her to compose herself by silent meditation. Indeed, I made haste to get away after I had executed my commission, for the scene was so delightfully affecting that I could stand it no longer."

The news of Mrs. Montagu's generosity rapidly spread through Peterhead and gave lively pleasure to all, as Mrs. Arbuthnot's worth was highly appreciated, and her straitened circumstances were a subject of general regret; while her independent spirit had made it very difficult to give her any assistance. It was a relief to many that Dr. Beattie had prevailed on her to accept Mrs. Montagu's gift. That she had done so was considered by Mrs. Montagu as an honour and a source of great gratification, her only regret being that she had not sooner had the privilege of knowing and assisting one so worthy of respect and esteem.¹

¹ Mrs. Montagu added: "I am pleased to find that by her husband she is so nearly allied to my first favourite of all the *beaux esprits*, Dr. Arbuthnot. He had none of the peevish jealousies of Mr. Pope, nor the harshness and pride of Dr. Swift. Conscious of more noble endowment, he was not anxious to

From this time, the two ladies corresponded occasionally, and in her first "most affectionate letter" Mrs. Montagu tells Mrs. Arbuthnot that, in case of her own death, she had provided by her will that the annuity shall be continued to her during her lifetime.

Beattie seems at this time to have been undecided whether he should continue to have a house of his own, or should board himself and his sons in some family. He must have felt that it was asking a great deal of his sister and his brother-in-law to give up their only daughter to him; and without a lady at the head of his establishment he was left much at the mercy of servants. In his dilemma, he applied to Mrs. Montagu for advice, and she replied: "You encourage me to speak my opinion on the subject of your boarding, or lodging, or keeping house. To be eased of the little domestic attentions, and care of household economy, evils multiplied and aggravated by the defects and infidelities of servants, is desirable. At the same time, unless you can place yourself where you may enjoy your own apartment at all times unmolested, and your leisure hours perfectly uninterrupted, I think housekeeping with all its small evils to be preferred to the loss of those prime blessings, liberty and leisure. There are few families in which there is not something of which one would rather not partake; and in the intimate society of the same roof you will participate in all the internal defects and external misfortunes of the family. There is an air of distrust if not of misanthropy in what I have said, which does not do me any honour, but if it can be serviceable to you, I shall not repent my homely, ill-favoured sincerity."

This advice was followed, as we find he continued to retain his house, and his niece continued to be with him during the winter months. This year, they were all settled in Aberdeen early in November.

In the correspondence of this year, a few letters remain to be mentioned.

In a letter to Lord Hailes, thanking him for some pamphlets of his composition that he had sent him, Beattie remarks: "The account of 'Leslie of Monymusk' was a great curiosity, and abounds so much in absurdity and falsehood, that I am tempted to look upon the whole as a fiction and to doubt whether such a man ever existed. On making some enquiry I do not find that there have been Leslies of Monymusk, for these two centuries at least, and the Archbishop who

obtain that character of a Wit. There is such ease and so natural an air in his writings, as proves him to have been witty without effort or contrivance. I have heard my old friend, Lord Bath, speak of him with great affection as a most worthy, amiable man, and as a companion, more pleasant and entertaining than either Pope or Swift. When I find much to admire in an author, I always wish to hear that he has qualities for which I may esteem and love him, and I have listened with great pleasure to Lord Bath and the late Lady Harvey's praises of Dr. Arbuthnot."

writes Leslie's life betrays such a total disregard to truth, that I can suppose him to have been capable of asserting anything. I have sometimes wondered at Boece's love of fable, and Buchanan's want of candour; but I begin to think it was the fashion of the time, and that the writers of those days never thought it a duty either to explore, or to speak the truth."¹

During the summer, Beattie had met Lord Elliot at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and some conversation ensued as to the Elliot pedigree. From the year 1343 Lord Elliot's descent was clear and ascertained, and his was the oldest branch of the family known in England. But the Elliots were supposed to have migrated from Scotland, and Lord Elliot had been told that a Mr. Eliot of that ilk, in Angus-shire, was the head of the Scottish Eliots or Elliots. Beattie knew there was no such family in that part of Scotland, but wrote to a Mr. Gordon in Edinburgh for information on this subject. He replied that all the Elliots of any consequence were now settled in the south of Scotland, but that the tradition was, that the surname was derived from a village in Angus, and that the bearers of it migrated to the border in the reign of James I. of Scotland, and subsequently some of them to England. Mr. Gordon offered to get further information. Lord Elliot thanks Beattie for the trouble he had taken for him.

¹ See the account of the "Fiction of Archangel Leslie" in the interesting book entitled "Church and Priory of Monymusk," by W. M. Macpherson, D.D., present minister there, published 1896, pages 226—231.

1785.

CHAPTER XX.

"EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY."

Beattie writes his "Evidences of Christianity"—Revises Mrs. Montagu's *Essay on Shakespeare* for a New Edition—Illness of both his Boys—Dr. Livingstone's death—Takes Miss Valentine and Montagu to Pitcaithley—He and James go to Edinburgh—Visits at Gordon and Cluny Castles—Marriage of Mrs. Montagu's nephew—Death of the Dowager Duchess of Portland—Mrs. Delany—Letter from Pinkerton—The weather.

DURING the winter of 1784–1785, Beattie enlarged and prepared for publication his little Treatise on the "Evidences of Christianity," a sketch of which he had drawn out some little time before. Of the aim that he had in view, in its composition, he writes:¹ "As it is intended for young people chiefly, I have endeavoured to write it in a plain, simple, and popular style, and to make it comprehend as much of the subject as could be expressed in so few words. I have been particularly attentive to those objections which are commonly made in conversation, and which seem to me most likely to pervert the young mind. Unbelievers are sometimes polite enough not to speak against religion in the presence of a clergyman; but as I am a layman it has often been my chance to bear a part in controversial conversation on this subject. I have met sometimes with a plausible but never with a formidable antagonist."

Towards the end of summer, when he was in Edinburgh, he sold the copyright of this work to Mr. Creech for sixty guineas, on the understanding that it was to be printed in two small volumes and to be published before Christmas.

It was early in this year, also, that, at Mrs. Montagu's request, he revised and corrected her "*Essay on Shakespeare*," of which she had been requested to issue a new edition, as it was out of print. She reminded him in Spring of his promise to pay her a long visit at Sandleford, and urged the fulfilment of it; but the illness of his boys prevented his leaving home. Montagu had met with an accident, and the confinement it entailed told on the health of one whom his father describes as "one of the most active little fellows ever seen"; while his brother was suffering from a fever.

He felt it the more necessary to remain with his boys until they had recovered, owing to the loss of his friend and physician, Dr.

¹ To Mrs. Montagu, June 3rd, 1785.

Livingstone, to whose care he "could have committed them without scruple." Of the tragically sudden death of this distinguished physician he writes to Mr. Baron Gordon :—

"April 5th.

"We have suffered a dreadful loss by the death of Dr. Livingstone; I shall not soon get the better of the shock it gave me. I owed him much as a physician, but I owed him still more as a friend. . . . My mind hitherto has been so much engrossed with a sense of what I have lost, that I have hardly had leisure to reflect, so much as I ought to have done, on the irreparable loss which the whole of this country has suffered, in being deprived of a man who was in so many respects a public blessing. A few hours before his death he had been with me; and being just recovered from a fit of gout, was in good health and high spirits. He insisted on my dining with him on Saturday—and on Saturday I saw his body laid in the grave. About seven in the evening, being in the house of a patient, he complained of a sudden pain at his heart, called for a glass of water, fetched a deep sigh, dropped down, and instantly expired without a groan. . . . Mrs. Livingstone and the rest of the family bore the shock with more firmness than could have been expected; at least they seemed so to bear it, but it appears too conspicuously in their faces that they have suffered severely. He had often told them that his death would be sudden, having for several years felt an uneasiness in the region of the heart."¹

A course of Pitcaithley waters having been recommended for Montagu, Beattie left him there under Miss Valentine's care, while he and James went on to Edinburgh, where they spent the month of August. Ten days spent at Gordon Castle, a short visit to Cluny Castle, and visits paid to his relatives at Laurencekirk and Montrose, when he went south to bring Montagu and Miss Valentine home, completed his wanderings for the year, and he settled down to the duties of the winter in the beginning of November. Montagu was entered as a pupil at the Grammar School at this time.

During this year, Mrs. Montagu's nephew and heir was married to Miss Charlton. The marriage met with her full approval, and was the source of much comfort and happiness to her in her declining years. After the wedding, she took the young couple with her to Sandford, "where we have lived ever since in the greatest harmony, and, I should have added, felicity," had not her happiness been alloyed by the death of her lifelong friend, the Dowager Duchess of Portland.

Her concern, however, is expressed more for Mrs. Delany's loss

¹ Beattie drew up a sketch of Dr. Livingstone's life and character for his widow for private circulation.

than for her own, and of it and of the way in which it had been kindly alleviated by the King and Queen she gives Beattie a full account. Mrs. Delany, she says, had not only, in her eighty-fifth year, to mourn the loss of her friend, but also, from the narrowness of her means, to be deprived by that loss of many comforts. During the winter, while they were in London, she was in the habit of spending every evening with the Duchess, and, when she went to Bulstrode, accompanied her and remained with her during the summer. She would now have been confined for the whole year, "in her habitation in the little court in St. James's Place, had not their Majesties with a princely liberality sent Lady Weymouth to her to say they had got a house ready furnished for her at Windsor, and desired she would also accept a pension of three hundred a year."

It had not been the Duchess's intention to leave her friend unprovided for, but Mrs. Delany had desired that she should not leave her any legacy. This Mrs. Montagu condemns as "high heroics" on Mrs. Delany's part, which she attributes to her having imbibed some of the strange fancies of Jean Jacques Rousseau. She considers it was unkind to the Duchess, as "it must have alloyed the enjoyment of life, and embittered the fears of death, the apprehension of leaving a dear friend in uncomfortable circumstances." While consenting to accept an annuity, at Mrs. Delany's age it could not long have been a charge on the Duchess's family.

Pinkerton wrote in May that he was employed in publishing a collection of a hundred of the best ancient poems Scotland has to boast of, and that, when this work was finished, he intended to set about a regular and complete edition of Barbour's "Life of Robert Bruce," written in 1375. This poem, he considers, had it been written in any other language in Europe, would, a century ago, have passed through many editions, with notes by many learned men. There were, indeed, many vulgar editions of it, totally modernized; but he meant if possible to give it as the author wrote it, with a few brief notes, concerned principally with marking off the true facts from the romantic. As Barbour was an Archdeacon of the Cathedral of St. Machar in Old Aberdeen, Pinkerton applies to Beattie for any information regarding him which might be found in the College library or elsewhere. He adds that he has made a curious discovery in natural history lately, of a romantic bird foolishly called the solitary sparrow: "It is of a deep blue, the size of a blackbird, sings in the morning chiefly, and frequents only ruins and churches. It is surprising it has totally escaped poets. It is also found in the Archipelago among the ruins of temples. Is the bird known in Scotland?"

The weather during this year seems to have been severe. In April, Beattie writes of it: "Our winter has been most severe, and the longest I ever remember. We have had frost, snow and

storm for five months, with little or no intermission. Yesterday was warm and so is to-day; and the snow begins to disappear. Three days ago the thermometer, in the shade and exposed to the north, was two degrees under the freezing-point, and in the sun and exposed to the south, rose to eighty-four; so that one half of my house was in the Frigid and the other in the Torrid Zone."

1786.

CHAPTER XXI.

PROPOSAL TO UNITE KING'S AND MARISCHAL COLLEGES.

Publication of the "Evidences of Christianity"—Its reception by the public—Letters with regard to it from Mr. Arbuthnot, Lord Hailes, and the Bishop of Worcester—Mr. Baron Gordon again elected Rector of Marischal College—Lord George Gordon in Aberdeen during the Election of an M.P.—Beattie's reply to Mrs. Montagu's invitation to visit her, in which he mentions the loss of James Valentine at sea—His own and his son's illness—Proposed Union of King's and Marischal Colleges—Addison's Prose Works—Beattie unable to fulfil his intention of writing his Life, etc., as a Preface—Paper for the Royal Society of Edinburgh—Elected a Member of the Philosophical Society, America—Letters from Mr. A. Chalmers, and Mr. Baillie, Dochfour—An Anonymous Author and an Anonymous Donor of Charity.

Mr. CREMON had failed to fulfil his engagement that the "Evidences of the Christian Religion, Briefly and Plainly Stated," should appear at Christmas. It was not until the Easter of 1786 that the book was published. It was inscribed to the Bishop of Chester (Dr. Porteus), as, on seeing the first chapters of the work the previous summer, he had approved of its plan, and, believing that such a work was much wanted, had urged its speedy publication.

It was well received by the public, both in England and in Scotland; and a very favourable review of it appeared early in the *Edinburgh Magazine*. By September, the second edition was almost sold out.

Mr. Arbuthnot having met a well-bred Englishman in a book-seller's shop in Edinburgh, and entered into conversation with him on the subject of books, was pleased to hear him say that he had lately read Beattie's "Evidences" with "much delight," and that "it had been read and admired by persons of all ranks, religions and denominations in the part of England he belonged to."

Lord Hailes wrote: "I read the book the moment it was published, and to me it seems an excellent manual in defence of Christianity. You have got the wind of unbelievers; they will not be able to write a confutation shorter than your system. You have, with great prudence, waived some of our best arguments without yielding an inch of ground, as in the matter of prophecy. Had you insisted on such topics, the enemy would have abridged the works of former labourers in the same unrighteous vineyard, and met you with a parade of second-hand knowledge. . . . I am now risking a large work on the *five secondary causes of the rapid*

progress of Christianity, detailed in the Gospel according to Mr. Gibbon. Should I have the pleasure of meeting with you at Aberdeen in the second week of May, I mean to subject about one hundred and fifty pages to your examination."

Other friends wrote to thank Beattie for the copies of his "Evidences," among them the Bishop of Worcester. He adds: "I cannot wonder that the Bishops of Chester and Hunton engrossed you to themselves last summer. But you will remember that I have a claim, when you visit England again, to some share of your company."¹

In March, Beattie wrote to Mr. Baron Gordon informing him that he had again been elected Rector of Marischal College, and that his Assessors were "Mr. Cruden, the Provost of Aberdeen; Mr. Moir, of Scotston; Mr. Professor John Ross; and Mr. Robertson, of Foveran; and that Major James Mercer is Dean of Faculty." Beattie goes on to say: "We have had a very turbulent week,² but I do not hear that any mischief has happened. There was a grand illumination on Wednesday, and on Thursday a prodigious Ball, for which I am told that no fewer than five hundred tickets were issued. Lord George Gordon danced with Miss Cruden, the Provost's daughter, and I hear behaved very quietly. He is still in town. Whatever our friend, Mr. Ferguson, may have lost on the occasion, he has not lost everything. His good temper, politeness, eloquence, and the propriety of his whole behaviour have gained him many admirers among those to whom he was formerly a stranger and but little known."

After saying how much he felt obliged for the repeated honour Marischal College had conferred on him, Mr. Gordon, in his reply, writes: "I am glad to understand that Lord George Gordon does no mischief. The circumstance does great credit to all those who are employed in the duties of teaching and directing the morals of the people in that part of the country. The quietness of his Lordship is occasioned more by their moderation and good principles than by his own humour, for I strongly suspect that he is inclinable to make a Mob wherever he has it in his power. I do not from that conclude that his dispositions were originally worse than yours or mine, but we are strangely the children of habit; we become gamblers and dram-drinkers by habit; and I thence conclude that his Lordship's

¹ Dr. Blacklock begins his letter of thanks for a copy of this work by saying: "After an interval of silence so long and so unaccountable as mine has been, I am really at a loss how to address you . . ." This should dispose of an accusation that has been made against Beattie, that he neglected Dr. Blacklock when he became acquainted with men of higher rank. No man less deserved such an accusation. His letters show that he never forgot, never was ashamed of acknowledging, his friends and his obligations to them, to whatever rank of society they belonged; and this letter shows that, if there were any neglect, it was on Dr. Blacklock's side, not on Beattie's.

² Presumably, the election of a member of Parliament was going on.

eminent practice and great success has made him by habit a Mob-raiser. I'm glad to hear he danced. He and I had much pleasantry and good-humour together, but I thought the gaiety of dancing had been altogether inconsistent with the severity of his religious principles. I am happy to hear that Mr. Ferguson's conduct gave such general satisfaction. He is certainly to petition, but what the result of that may be is more than I can conjecture."

This spring, Mrs. Montagu again urged Beattie to pay her his promised visit, and again he was obliged to decline: "The state of my health is one hindrance, and that of my little family another. My niece, who for these two or three years past has taken charge of my household, is gone to her father and mother, who are old people and who wish to have her with them for some time, having lately lost their second son, a very promising young man, who perished in a storm at sea the very day in which he had been advanced to the command of a ship. He was in all the great engagements of the last war, particularly in that of 12th April, 1782, and had given many proofs of courage and uncommon skill in his profession; which, however, had no other effect upon his manner than to make him modest and gentle to a degree, which endeared him greatly to everybody. He passed the winter before last with me. I hoped he might have lived to render still more important services to his country; but Providence disposed of him otherwise."

Some time before writing this letter to Mrs. Montagu, which had been penned with difficulty, Beattie had met with an accident, which was the prelude to a succession of troubles which lasted during the whole summer. He accompanied his niece to Montrose, and had left his younger boy there under her charge; when on his return home he fell, narrowly escaping breaking his right arm, but bruising it so severely that he was unable to make much use of it for a considerable time. In his niece's absence, there was no one to assist him but his son James. He was now a youth of seventeen, and had just finished a five years' attendance at College and taken the degree of M.A. The confinement caused by his attendance on his father, following immediately on a winter of hard study, brought on an illness which at first was thought serious. As soon as he was able for the journey, his father took him to Peterhead, where he recovered day by day; while, on the other hand, Beattie himself seemed to lose, as his son regained, strength.

In consequence of his increasing weakness, he returned to Aberdeen in the beginning of August, and had no sooner got home than he was seized with a fever, accompanied by violent symptoms. These had moderated after a week, and he was pronounced to be in no immediate danger; but his recovery was very slow and he was still very weak, when, about the middle of September, he was summoned to Montrose to see Montagu. The boy had been unwell for some

time; and, as he seemed getting worse instead of better, his physician insisted on his father coming to see him.

The journey was too much for Beattie, and, after his return home, brought on several relapses of his illness. He had, however, the satisfaction of bringing his niece, as well as his boy, to Aberdeen with him, and of seeing the latter gradually regaining strength.

He had wished before the winter session to spend a few weeks at Gordon Castle, as he had been urged to do by the Duke and Duchess; but, finding he was unable to bear the motion of a carriage, he had to remain at home, and in this "languid state" he had to begin his winter labours.

During this summer, one of the many futile attempts was made to unite King's and Marischal Colleges, Aberdeen, and to form of them one university. The movement was begun by the Professors of Marischal College, who had been advised by Lord Bute and his friends that a renewed attempt to bring about the union should be made at this time. A petition from the Professors of both Colleges had been prepared for presentation to the King; and this was intended to be supported by a memorial approving of the petition signed by as many of the nobility and gentry of Scotland as possible. The Duke of Gordon joined heartily in the scheme, "and the Duchess also is using all her endeavours to insure success to her application with Mr. Dundas and others."¹ The cause of this movement and its aims Beattie explains to Mrs. Montagu: "The two Colleges at Aberdeen, though situated within a mile of each other, are distinct Universities, in which the same sciences are taught by two sets of Professors, and neither set is so numerous as to go through a complete course of Academical education. If these two Universities were united in one, one set of Professors would become unnecessary; and as the present incumbents chose to retire, or were removed by death, their salaries might be applied to the purpose of establishing new Professorships for teaching those sciences which at present are not taught here at all. In this way, in the course of a few years the united University would become as complete in itself and as numerous as that of Glasgow, and Law Schools and Medical Schools might be introduced, both of which are now wanting; though at Aberdeen there is an Infirmary of very considerable magnitude, and though many young men in this part of the country are bred to law and physica."

But though the Marischal College Professors were unanimous, and signed the petition to the King as a body, but few of those of King's College did so; and their majority, and the influence of the North of Scotland (from which King's College students chiefly came) prevailed. More than seventy years had yet to pass before the time for union was ripe: it was accomplished in 1860.

¹ Letter from Professor Copland to Dr. Beattie, July 16th, 1786.

The contest between the two Colleges was not at any time conducive to harmony between their members. Beattie remarks with regard to the feeling at this time: "Philosophy ought, no doubt, to be 'musical as is Apollo's lute,' but literary societies seem to lie as open as their neighbours to the incursions of discord. I fear we have still among us too much of the old leaven of contention; that leaven which had been fermenting and festering, from the days of Aristotle downward, to that memorable period when Bacon arose and taught the world that philosophy and moralising are different things. But the present contest between the King's and Marischal Colleges is such as not to occasion any private animosity. I hope it will not; in me I am resolved it shall not. All the persons concerned I have long had a great regard for, and still respect them as much as ever."

What heat did arise over the matter at this time, Sir W. Forbes tells us, "Beattie exerted himself strenuously and not unsuccessfully to allay." Having an annual custom of dining together at the first return of their yearly meeting, Dr. Beattie laboured that all that had passed on the subject should be buried in oblivion, and nothing prevail but harmony and good-humour.¹

Beattie had readily entered into a proposal that had been made by some of his friends that Addison's prose works should be printed separately from his other writings, and that Beattie should append some remarks upon them. He had mentioned the subject to Mr. Creech who referred to his having done so when writing to him in May of this year, and says: "I have now resolved to print a beautiful edition of Addison's periodical papers, and would wish for your opinion and advice in the arrangement. The life and account of the author may be the last printed, and if you will undertake it, I shall leave the terms entirely to yourself."

Addison's style had been Beattie's model in forming his own, and his admiration of his writings would have made the work of commenting upon them most congenial. He proposed, in his preface, to give a life of Addison, and a criticism showing the peculiar merits of his style, with an historical account of the changes that the English language had undergone, and also a note of warning of the danger that he considered it ran of becoming debased by the innovations that were being found in the language and style of even the best writers of the day. During this summer, though not able to do

¹ In Beattie's account book, the following entry occurs at the end of this year. It is headed:

"Money thrown away."

Paid Mr. Copland part of my share of Union expenses ...	...	£5	8	6
Paid Mr. Copland the remainder in full ...	...	8	13	7
		£14	2	1

much, he had been arranging some materials for the work; but he found that to execute his plan properly more time and labour would be required than his health and other duties would then allow, and very reluctantly he was obliged to give it up for the present, though he still hoped to be able to execute it at another time; a hope which was not realized. All he could do for this work, which was published in 1790, was to give Tickell's "Life of Addison" for the Biography, and some remarks from Johnson on Addison's prose, to both of which he added some notes for further illustration.

It was probably owing to his thoughts having been turned at this time to the innovations in the language that in December he wrote a paper in the form of a letter supposed to be written by an Aberdeen merchant, enclosing one which he had received from a London correspondent, full of the new phrases, of which he asks an explanation from a friend as they are unintelligible to him. His paper was sent to Mr. Arbuthnot with the request that, should he think it "good for anything," he would send it to the *Lowger* or the *Caledonian Mercury*. Many of the phrases marked as novel in this letter have since been adopted into common use.¹

During the spring, Beattie had written a paper for the Royal Society, Edinburgh. It was a "Dissertation on Virgil's Account of Æneas's Descent into the Nether World;" and he thought that by departing in several particulars from the opinions of former commentators and making the poet his own interpreter, he had thrown new light on that part of the Æneid, and removed the difficulties that had been supposed to attend the gates of ivory and horn, and the topography of the infernal regions, the various distributions of punishment, etc. As he could not be present to read the paper himself, Mr. Baron Gordon undertook the duty for him; but, having been lately married, his many engagements prevented his doing so until the following spring.

While lying ill of fever, Beattie was informed by the following letter of his having been elected a member of the American Philosophical Society:—

"PHILADELPHIA,
"August 1st, 1784.

"The American Revolution, which divided the British Empire, made no breach in the republic of letters. As a proof of this, a stranger to your person and a citizen of a country lately hostile to yours has expressed his obligations to you for the knowledge and pleasure he has derived from your excellent writings by procuring your admission into the American Philosophical Society, a certificate of which, subscribed by our illustrious president, Dr. Franklin, and the other officers of the Society, you will receive by the next vessel

¹ See Appendix.

that sails to any port in North Britain from this city. The stranger alluded to finished his studies in medicine in Edinburgh in the year 1769, and has ever since taught chemistry and medicine in the College of Philadelphia. His name (with the greatest respect for yours) is

“BENJAMIN RUSH.”

In the spring of this year, Dr. Rush had sent Beattie a copy of an Oration that he had delivered before this Society, and which had been published at the request of its members, on the “Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty.”

A Mr. John Bisset, who seems to have been an old pupil of Beattie's, and who dates from Cambridge, Maryland, transmitted the Oration, and at the same time gave Beattie some account of its writer. Dr. Rush had studied medicine both in London and in Edinburgh, and was now a physician of the first rank in Philadelphia. He was much esteemed for his amiable character in private life, while his occasional publications on politics, religion, and other subjects were considered to have done much good. He was a great admirer of Beattie's writings, and had often told Mr. Bisset that he had derived great assistance in his investigations from the perusal of them. Mr. Bisset says of himself that he had lately taken orders in the Episcopal Church, having been ordained by Bishop Seabury; but having some prospect of a professorship in a college, he was uncertain whether he would ultimately settle as a teacher or as a preacher.

Among the letters received this year, is one from Mr. Alexander Chalmers, in which he says that he had not sufficient finances at his command to carry on the *Westminster Magazine*, of which he had been editor and proprietor, and had been obliged to drop it. He was now meditating issuing anonymously a work with some such title as “A System of Atheism, explained and established from facts in opposition to the evidences and practice of Christianity.” In this work he hopes to turn the laugh against the present system of practical infidelity “by means of a sort of satirical talent which some are kind enough to allow me.” He says that he is “no metaphysician, and except the ‘Essay on Truth,’ and a few of the works to which it is an answer, I have read nothing on this subject, and perhaps never shall, until I am convinced that my judgment is so thoroughly established as not to be staggered by sophistry nor alienated from common sense by a specious show of reasoning. This, perhaps, may not be giving fair play to infidelity and Deism, but I confess I would rather be a fool or a bigot with Bacon, Newton, and Boyle than a liberal philosopher with Bolingbroke, Hume, and Priestley; if in this respect I am too narrow, remember, my dear Sir, you taught me; nor, I am sure, would you wish to blot out the following lines which I find in my manuscript copy of your lectures, ‘habits

of doubting and recollecting objections are very unfriendly both to the head and to the heart, to the understanding and to the imagination.’”

Mr. Baillie writes from Dochfour to ask how he could procure a College bursary for a young man in whom he is interested for his father's sake. The father, Lachlan Maclachlan, had been settled for several years by “the Society in Edinburgh” as a preacher and teacher in a district in Mr. Baillie's neighbourhood, where about fifty families had been “almost in a state of nature, their distance from Inverness, their parish church, and, indeed, from all other churches, being such as put it out of their power to attend Divine worship anywhere.” Maclachlan's labours among these people had been very successful and so faithful that Mr. Baillie had done everything in his power to assist him, and had given him a small farm rent free; but he had a large family, and his salary of ten pounds, together with the farm, was barely sufficient to maintain them. His greatest ambition was to make his eldest son a clergyman. Mr. Baillie would willingly have assisted him to educate his son for this position by paying his expenses at College, had it not been for his “very heavy losses by the late war;” but, could he procure a bursary for the lad, he would supplement it so as to make it sufficient for his expenses.

An anonymous letter, bearing the London postmark and evidently written in a disguised hand, enclosed fifty pounds in Bank of England notes, and entreated Beattie “to pass his eyes around and bestow the enclosed upon such as he shall think the most proper objects of charity, when and how he shall deem most eligible. “The writer” (who would be proud of being known to him on any other occasion) “thinks Dr. Beattie will require no apology for being desired to do a humane action.”

In a paper docketed by Beattie “Anonymous Charity,” he expresses his determination to execute the trust without delay by relieving those whom he has ascertained to be real objects of charity, and, when the money is spent, to endeavour to convey to the donor an account of the names and circumstances of those who have been the recipients of his or her bounty. At the same time, and for the sake of example, he would publish in the newspapers a short account of this singular occurrence. If he did not live to carry out these intentions, he directs his executors to do what he had intended doing.

This is followed by an account of the disbursement of the money. A great part of it was given in sums of ten shillings to poor and infirm men and women, many of the latter being widows. A few indigent gentlemen and women get as much as a pound each, and there was five pounds each given to the Aberdeen Infirmary, Dispensary, and Poor's Hospital. It does not appear whether Beattie

ever discovered the donor, nor what attempts he made to communicate the manner in which the money had been spent.

Of the weather of this year, Mrs. Montagu writes on May 8th :
"The town is gay and every night produces balls and assemblies, but the weather is so severe we seem to be keeping a merry Christmas. No wreath or garland has adorned May Day but such as awkward art has put on the brows of chimney-sweepers and milkmaids."

1787.

CHAPTER XXII.

APPOINTMENT OF HIS ELDER SON AS JOINT PROFESSOR.

Appointment of James Hay Beattie as joint professor with his father—Beattie, his son, and Principal Campbell go first to Edinburgh and then to London—Duchess of Gordon's account of Mr. Pitt—Beattie's interview with the King and Queen at Windsor—Herschel's Telescope—Visits to Hunton and Sandleford—Illness of James Hay—His admission to the Professorship—He goes to Peterhead, his father to Gordon Castle—Principal Campbell returns home, partly by sea, after having arranged for the publication of his work on the Gospels—Lines to Lady Charlotte Gordon—Beattie's nephew appointed assistant to Dr. Skene by the College—Dr. Porteus made Bishop of London—Improvement in Mrs. Arbuthnot's comfort by means of Mrs. Montagu's Annuity—James Hay teaches the Class during an illness of his father—Remarks on the controversy as to the superiority of the Male mind over the Female—Extracts from Letters.

DURING this winter, it was with difficulty that Beattie struggled through the work of the session. When, in February, Mr. Creech sent him several books to assist him in writing his proposed "Life of Addison," he had to reply that he feared it would be some time before he could make use of them, as his old symptoms of dizziness, confusion of thought, and failure of memory had returned to such an extent as would have alarmed him, had he not experienced them before. As the best remedy for his complaints, he meant, if able, to go from home as soon as the College closed, and would then see Mr. Creech in Edinburgh.

It was this state of his health that made him anxious to have an assistant on whom he could depend to take his place in the classroom when he was unable himself to perform its duties; and which made him anxious for the immediate appointment of his son either as joint professor with himself or as his assistant and successor.

The first step he took in the matter was to lay it before his colleagues and ask their approval, which he did in writing, "as it is reasonable that you should deliberate upon it when I am not present." After giving his health as the reason for his desire to have assistance at hand, though he had no intention of making use of that assistance except when unable to teach himself, he states the qualifications of his son for the position. "Of his behaviour and proficiency while at College I need not say anything, as that is sufficiently known to those Professors under whom he studied. . . . It may be proper, however, that I lay before the College some things concerning him which they cannot be supposed

to know. . . . Having for some years had this employment in view for him, I took pains to give such a direction to his studies as might imperceptibly prepare him for it. And I am well enough pleased to find, that though he has been a very assiduous student in all the parts of learning that are taught here, the bent of his genius seems to be towards theology, classical learning, morality, poetry, and criticism. In Greek he has read Homer's 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey,' the 'Batrachomyomachia,' and a great part of Hesiod, the greatest part of Xenophon, the 'Phædo' of Plato, six or seven books of Euclid, Arrian's 'History of Alexander,' two plays of Sophocles, part of Herodotus and Plutarch, of the Septuagint and New Testament, the Ethics and Poetics of Aristotle, Longinus, several of the Odes of Pindar, etc. Latin he understands better than any other person of his years I have ever known; he wrote it pretty correctly when he was a boy, and as I have sometimes conversed with him in that language I know that with a little practice he could speak it easily; he is also making good progress in the French tongue. From his early years I accustomed him to read no books but good ones, and to study everything he read with grammatical and critical accuracy. The moral sciences as far as I teach them he knows very well, and as he has a methodical head and ready elocution, I flatter myself a little practice would make him a good teacher.

"To all this it may not perhaps be impertinent to add, that as he has passed part of several summers in Edinburgh and two in London and other parts of England and visited wherever I visited, he may be supposed to have seen a little of the world; of which, though he is rather silent in company, I find he has been no inaccurate observer."

To this the College answered: "That they were so well satisfied with his son's proficiency and character that they would immediately, notwithstanding his youth, grant the recommendation requested if it were not for the present critical state of the business of the Union. They therefore desired him to let the matter rest a little till the issue of that affair could be more certainly foreseen."¹

In consequence of this answer, Beattie sounded several of the Professors of King's College to learn how far he could depend on their assent, should a union take place. He found "that they were as favourable as could have been expected, and though they made no promise, which indeed was not solicited, they spoke in very strong terms of what they were pleased to call the delicacy of my conduct with respect to my colleagues and them. They seemed to think that I might have carried my point by a private application to the Crown in my own name. This might perhaps be true; but I would not do a thing so disrespectful to Marischal College."

¹ Negotiations on the subject had not yet ceased.

Of all that had passed with regard to this matter Beattie wrote a full account to Mr. Baron Gordon, who was again re-elected Rector of Marischal College this spring. Mr. Gordon wrote immediately in reply that he highly approved of his plan for the settlement of his son; but counselled that there should be no delay in making application for the appointment. He fears that Beattie's bad health may already have raised sanguine expectations, "and you have no notion how early and vigilant some people are in securing appointments. Might you not apply to the Duchess of Gordon immediately, and inform her of your plan? She could easily talk with Mr. Dundas, and the business might be so far done, in perfect consistency with the union in all its prospects. . . . My short acquaintance with Courts and Ministers was sufficient to teach me what use can be made of a pretended pre-engagement and how much benefit often ensues from an early application."

Beattie took Mr. Gordon's advice and got the following reply from the Duchess:—

"To let me know any manner in which I could oblige you was but doing justice to that sincere friendship I have ever felt for you, and shall to the latest hour of my existence. I sent for Mr. Dundas the moment I received yours, and gave him your letter to read. I told him how much I was interested in your happiness, and the interest of your family. He entered into every feeling, but disapproved of your delaying it—from any motive whatever, and said it could in no manner affect the union. . . . We determined to give in your resignation, and instantly to appoint James—if wrong, forgive us. You may be assured I did it for the best, and might have been doubtful had not Dundas been of the same opinion. The Duke was gone a jaunt with Huntly. . . . Mr. Dundas said in general they objected to give an appointment to a son, but he hoped your *name* would make that easy. . . . Mr. Dundas came back this moment to tell me that everything was fixed for your son's Professorship, but that he was afraid he was not yet of age, and he had refused to appoint one for that reason only a few days ago—do let me hear from you first post."

Beattie laid the Duchess's letter before his colleagues, who unanimously agreed that Mr. Dundas's advice should be followed and the appointment proceeded with at once. But they demurred to accepting Beattie's resignation, until assured that his re-appointment along with his son, as Joint Professors, was immediately to follow.

As to his son's age, Beattie wrote to the Duchess that it was true he was not of age,¹ but that he was considerably older than Mr.

¹ He would enter his twentieth year at the commencement of the next College session.

John Stewart was, when he was made *sole* Professor of Mathematics—and that, as he only wished him to assist himself, in case of illness, and not to do the whole business of the office, his age could hardly be objected to, and the College did not object to it.

Both the objection of the Professors and that of Mr. Dundas were removed; and Beattie waited expecting to hear from the Duchess of the conclusion of the business, before setting out on his intended journey southwards. No letter, however, came, and a further reason for delay occurred.

Principal Campbell's work on the Gospels was now finished, and Beattie was interesting himself in finding a publisher for it. He had written to Mr. Creech on the subject; but he fought shy of undertaking the work, not from any doubt as to its value or ability and knowing that "much is expected from it," but from the fear of its commanding only a limited sale, a bookseller's estimate of the merit of a book being "merely by the sale of it." However, he would wish to know Beattie's and the Doctor's "opinion as to the value of the manuscript. I will then candidly give you mine, and you may believe I will go as far to serve Dr. Campbell as any man." He adds that he hopes to see Beattie in Edinburgh, but that he will not be there until the middle of June.¹

As the Principal had resolved to accompany Beattie and his son, first to treat with Creech, and, if he failed to come to terms with him, to go on to London to offer his manuscript to a publisher there, the party did not leave Aberdeen until they knew they would find Creech in Edinburgh.

While there, Beattie corrected and revised his Paper which had been read in the Royal Society that spring and was now about to be published among its "Transactions." He also had an opportunity of revising his pamphlet on "Scotticisms," the publication of which was going on at the same time.

The Principal and Mr. Creech failed to agree; so he accompanied his friends to London, which they reached early in July. Before leaving Edinburgh, Beattie had written to the Duchess of Gordon that he hoped soon to have the pleasure of waiting on her and hearing how matters stood as to his son's appointment. She had replied:—

"Saturday."²

"Still in Scotland; I am very much disappointed at it, I assure you, as I expected you in town every day for some time past. Everything is settled to your mind. Lord Sydney went to the King, and he told me everything should be done when you came up, and I hope you will come directly, as I only wait for a Court day to

¹ He writes from London.

² Of the Duchess's letters preserved in Beattie's correspondence, few have any date or indication of the place they are written from, and generally have no formal opening, but begin, as in this case, as if carrying on a conversation.

pay my compliments, and then leave town. I wish much to see you here. I have been constantly going for days into the country, and Mr. Pitt has been mostly of our society—never was so merry and pleasing a companion. In one of our evening conversations poetry was the subject; my favourite “Minstrel” I talked of as I felt, and was delighted to find a certain Beattie and Milton being his first favourites. During the course of the evening he repeated the most of it.¹ When we meet I shall show you his favourite lines. There is an elegance in his taste, and a wise kind of folly in his social hours of conversation, that raises him more in my estimation than even his political talent. But come and be convinced. You would be delighted with him; there is a rectitude of mind, and steady firm principle of honour, in every word. Do come soon.”

On his arrival in London, Beattie went at once to the Duchess, and found she was to leave London the following day. He, however, had had a long interview with her, and got from her directions as to how he was to apply to Lord Sydney, then Principal Secretary of State, about his son's appointment. Of this interview he writes to Miss Valentine: “There was nobody with us but Lady Charlotte, who has become a most accomplished and beautiful young woman, and is universally admired. The town says she is going to be married to Mr. Pitt, but this is perhaps only *town talk*. The Duchess regretted much that I had not come a little sooner, that she might have introduced me to Mr. Pitt, who had been pleased to say that he wanted much to see me, but was now gone into the country.”

On applying to Lord Sydney, he learned that his son's patent was issued, and had a few days ago been delivered to Mr. Spottiswood; and this gentleman, whom Beattie found to be an old acquaintance, assured him that the patent would be put into his hands in a few days, as it only required a few additional signatures.² “So that this affair may be presumed to be concluded; and the Principal has congratulated my son upon the occasion.” In the end of this letter, he says, “Two editions of my little book of ‘Evidences’ are sold off, and a third is going to press. There has also been an Irish edition.”

In his next letter to Miss Valentine, he gives an account of his visit to Windsor:—

“LONDON,
“July 20th, 1787.

“I am just returned from Windsor, where I passed three days. I went thither partly to see some friends, but chiefly that I might

¹ The “Minstrel.”

² “Mr. Spottiswood told me further that the patent was of a pretty old date, of June or May he thinks, and that it had lain so long in the office only because nobody had appeared to claim it. This, you know, I often suspected to be the case, having known such things to happen before.”

pay my respects to the King and Queen. They both received me in the most gracious manner. I saw the King first on the terrace, where he knew me at first sight, and did me the honour to converse with me a considerable time. Next morning I saw him again at prayers in his chapel, where he was pleased to introduce me to the Queen, who inquired very kindly after my health; observing that many years had passed since she saw me last; regretted the bad weather which I had met with at Windsor (for it had rained incessantly), which, said she, has made your friends see less of you than they wished; and after some other conversation her Majesty and the Princess Elizabeth, who attended her, made a slight curtsy and stepped into the carriage that waited for them at the chapel door. The King remained with us for some time longer and talked of various matters, particularly the union of the Colleges. He asked whether I was for or against it. I told him I was a friend of the union. 'But Lord Kinnoull,' said he, 'is violent against it' (this, by-the-by, I did not know before). The King spoke jocularly of my having become fat. 'I remember the time,' said he, 'when you were as lean as Dr. ——— there,' pointing to a gentleman who was standing by. 'You look very well,' said his Majesty to me; 'I am convinced you are well, if you would only think so! Do, Dr. Heberden,' said the King, 'convince Dr. Beattie that he is in perfect health.' Dr. Heberden was also standing by. 'I have been endeavouring, Sir,' returned the Doctor, 'to do so.' After two such attestations of my health as those of the King and Dr. Heberden, I suppose I need not say more on that subject. The truth is, I am better than I was. The giddiness has not troubled me but one day since I came to London.

"At Windsor I met with several other friends, particularly Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Delany, Mr. and Mrs. de Luc, and I was often with the famous Miss Burney (author of 'Cecilia'), who has got an office in the Queen's household, and is one of the most agreeable young women I have met with—has great vivacity joined with a most unassuming gentleness and simplicity of manners. I passed an afternoon a few days ago with Lord Rodney. I was very glad to meet that celebrated veteran, and much pleased with his conversation. He is of the middle size, rather lean, has handsome features for an old man, piercing eyes, and is very well bred."

Of this visit to Windsor, James Hay writes to his friend Mr. George Glennie: "From London we made a short excursion to Windsor, and visited Herschel's grand astronomical apparatus. The speculum of his largest telescope is not yet finished, but we saw the tube belonging to it, which is five feet in diameter, and, I suppose, almost fifty in length. It is placed upon the green before his house, and is moved and suspended by tackles of pulleys and rack-work with such

nicety that notwithstanding its weight and size it yields to the smallest pressure of one's hand. Unluckily, neither the moon nor any of the planets were visible during our stay at Mr. Herschel's."

After leaving Windsor, Beattie and his son visited the Bishop of Chester at Hunton, and Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford. Their stay with the latter was cut short by the threatened illness of his son, which made Beattie anxious to return to London to consult a physician in whom he had confidence. By following his advice, in a few days James seemed sufficiently recovered to allow of their setting out on their homeward journey, when, fortunately, an unforeseen engagement made Beattie delay a day longer than he had intended, as in the evening his son had a sudden and severe return of his illness. The attack left him very weak; but, as soon as he was at all able, they journeyed slowly home, making some stay for medical advice both at Morpeth and in Edinburgh.¹

On September 28th, shortly after his return to Aberdeen, James's admission to the Professorship took place, on which occasion his father gave a dinner in Masson's Hotel, Queen Street, to which upwards of thirty guests were invited. As a few weeks of the Peterhead waters had been recommended to perfect James's recovery, his father accompanied him there, and left him under Dr. Laing's care, with a young man to attend on him, while he paid a promised visit to Gordon Castle.

Principal Campbell had preferred to return home, partly by sea, immediately on finishing his business with regard to his manuscript, to waiting to return with Beattie as he proposed. "To have nothing to do, which is very much my case at present, is always to me a very grievous burden," he writes, when thanking Beattie for his letter from Hunton, in which some proposal for their journey home together had been made. This burden, however, he adds, had been much lightened by the uncommon hospitality, attention, and care he had received from Mr.² and Mrs. Williamson, with whom he and the Beatties (when in London) had lodged.

It was during his stay at Gordon Castle this autumn that Beattie wrote his verses addressed to Lady Charlotte, the occasion of which he relates to his son: "It has of late been fashionable here to write verses and address them to Lady Charlotte. Mr. Dundas set the example, and was followed by Sir John Macpherson. I thought it incumbent on me to attempt something, which you will see on the other page. I do not desire you to admire it. The versification is tolerable, which is perhaps its chief excellence."

¹ From the effects of this illness James Hay never fully recovered. It was the prelude of his early death.

² Mr. Williamson had at this time left Oxford, and lived in London at 2, Little Smith Street, Dean's Yard, Westminster, where he seems to have remained till presented to the living of Plumtree, near Nottingham.

James replied to his father's letter :—

“ PETERHEAD,

“ October 11th, 1787.

“ You wish to know what I have been doing. I have, then, conversed with Dr. Laing about Natural Philosophy, his patients, and his organ; with Mr. Wilson about Greenland, navigation, and whales, etc.; with Mrs. Arbuthnot about Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Butler; I have played at backgammon with Father Soot, and have deplored with his son the present state of partridges and the useless severity of the Game Act. Moreover, I have amused myself with walking and shooting as far as the weather and the laws would permit, and have rode on horseback to ‘Bullers of Buchan,’ which, though indeed terribly magnificent, hardly came up to the expectations I had formed of it. My steed is not descended either from Pyrois or Aethon, but is a very good sort of animal, and one of the best possible for my purpose, not having sense enough to start nor strength enough to run away, and it would be very wicked if I were to find fault with him, as his master let the cart lie idle in order to accommodate me. Thus I have given you a full and true account of all my proceedings, speaking nonsense for the usual reason—because I have nothing else to say. I am much obliged to you for the verses, which I have read again and again with great satisfaction. I admire the versification and turn of the language, especially in that line—

‘Beaming with the benignity of Heaven.’

The poem has (what very few complimentary poems have), truth, and a good moral with beautiful and pertinent description.”

On leaving Gordon Castle, Beattie rejoined his son at Peterhead, and they returned home together. James had improved in health, but was far from strong; so, when the College proposed that he should not only assist his father, when necessary, in the teaching of his class, but also undertake the charge of Mr. Skene's class, when his business (as a medical man) should call him away, his father “excused” him from accepting the post, and “that charge has devolved upon my nephew with the consent of all concerned and without my interfering at all in the matter.”¹

Early in November, Beattie heard from his friend Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester, that he had been promoted to the see of London. “Few things,” Beattie writes to Mrs. Montagu, “could have given me so much pleasure. It is a station in which his great talent for business and for doing good will find ample scope; yet so as not to take him to such a distance from his friends, or subject him to such bodily fatigue as the duties of his former diocese often made necessary.”

¹ From a letter to Dr. Laing, November 4th.

In the same letter, he informs Mrs. Montagu of the improvement that the pension which she gave to Mrs. Arbuthnot has wrought in the comfort of the old lady's surroundings: "It gives me no little pleasure to observe how much to the better her poor old house is changed, since she has had the honour to be under your patronage. The roof, which was entirely decayed, has undergone a thorough repair, her moth-eaten table and chairs, which were on the point of falling to pieces by their own weight, have given place to a set of new ones, not fine, indeed, but neat and substantial. The sundry roofs of her few apartments are clean and whitewashed, and the mouldiness of her walls concealed by a decent covering of printed paper. In her dress I perceive little or no change; for in that respect, even in her worst days, she always contrived to appear like a gentlewoman."

Beattie had hoped that he would not, during this session, be obliged to have recourse to the assistance of his son; but an attack of illness in December compelled him to avail himself of it. He mentions this to Sir William Forbes:—

"December 10th, 1787.

"I wished to have written to you by Mr. —, but when he was here I was ill. My son on that occasion took upon him for the first time the management of the class, and acquitted himself, not only to my satisfaction and theirs, but also to his own. It was not my intention that he should appear in his new character till next winter; but I am glad he has had this trial, as it has satisfied him that he is equal to his business. . . . His health was improved by Peterhead; but he is not robust, and I am obliged to exert my authority in moderating his application to study."

In the same letter, he regrets that he had not been able to pay his respects to Miss Bowdler when in London. This lady had, in the beginning of the year, sent him a copy of her poems and essays through Sir W. Forbes. In answering some remarks of hers, he is led to write: "Of the superiority of male to female minds much has been said and written, but perhaps in too general terms. In what relates to the peculiar business and duty of either sex, the genius of that sex will, I believe, be found to have the superiority. . . . Matters of learning, taste and science are not more the natural province of the one sex than the other; and with regard to these, were they to have the same education and opportunities the minds of the two sexes would be found to approach more nearly to equality. The same *education*, however, they cannot have, because each must be trained up for its own *peculiar* business; nor the same *opportunities*, because many scenes of observation are open to men from which women are, by their reserve and modesty, excluded, and some open to women to which men are with great propriety, though from a different reason, denied admittance. If one were to enter into the

detail of all these particulars I imagine it would not be difficult to say what sorts of writing and parts of learning the two sexes might cultivate with *equal* success, and in what women would be *superior* to men, and men *superior* to women; and the inferences as they occur to me at present would, if I mistake not, receive confirmation from the history of literature."

Two views of the political state of the country are given in the correspondence of this year. In February, Mr. Rose, Chiswick, writes: "I have no news to send you of any importance. Our political disputes are far from being ended, and what they will terminate in the wisest men amongst us cannot possibly foresee. There is but too much ground to fear, however, very serious and alarming consequences from the dispute between the Lords and Commons. There is the greatest impatience in the public to know the King's answer to the address of the Commons, which is to be carried up to-morrow and which will probably throw great light upon the measures which are intended to be pursued. Lord North and Mr. Fox are obviously losing ground every day; the addresses which now fill the *Gazette* are likely to fix the present ministry in their places. The King, *entre nous*, wants wisdom. Both Houses of Parliament are corrupt, we are loaded with debt, distracted with faction, and there is no public virtue. This is a melancholy picture, but I am convinced a true one."

In November, the Duchess of Gordon writes: "The nation is in perfect union, only one voice, and that—to adore Mr. Pitt."

In February, Dr. Percival sends an account of the newly established Manchester Academy, and begs Beattie to give his "free and unreserved opinion on it," as "any hints for its improvement suggested by so able a judge will be received with great respect both by the Trustees and tutors." He mentions that the institution is the revival of one that had formerly acquired considerable celebrity at Warrington, but had been closed; and that the Roman Catholics were proposing to purchase its vacant buildings for the purpose of establishing a great school for their youth. He heartily wished them success in their undertaking: "For it is a disgrace to our Government and nation, and injurious to some of our most important interests, that the Catholics should be compelled to seek for tuition abroad. When instructed in this enlightened land, where knowledge and truth cannot be suppressed, they may retain the nominal distinction of their Church, but will assuredly lose the spirit of it."¹

¹ As Dr. Percival was a medical man, Beattie had sent him a copy of his sketch of Dr. Livingstone's life, on which Dr. Percival remarks: "The abilities he" (Dr. Livingstone) "displayed in his profession must render his death a sensible loss. His skill in lithotomy, from the facts you have related, was greater than that of any operator I have ever heard of."

Through the Bishop of Norwich, Beattie in May received a note from Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, in which he hopes Beattie will excuse him for having published in the Pennaylvanian newspapers an extract from his letter expressing his pleasure at having been admitted a member of the American Philosophical Society. This he said he had done "in order to assist the sale of his (Beattie's) defence of the Christian religion, which will be republished in this city (Philadelphia) in a few days."

In November, Dr. Duncan, Smallholme, prefaces a critique on Beattie's "Evidences of Christianity," by acknowledging "the just sense I have long had of the great service of which you have been to the interest of truth and virtue and the cause of the religion of Jesus." He had read Beattie's "Evidences," he goes on to say, with attention and instruction, but he objects to several expressions used in connexion with our Saviour, such as "taught by a poor carpenter," "He Himself being a carpenter," as being irreverent. All his strictures are of this nature, showing the prominence given to the Divine nature of the Saviour over the human by orthodox divines of that date. Beattie's answers to his criticisms, though said to be enclosed in Dr. Duncan's letter, have not been preserved.

Mr. Boswell, in October, begs Beattie to let him have any letters he had received from Johnson, or any anecdotes or fragments of his conversation he may remember to assist him in the "Doctor's Life," which he is preparing for the press.

Samuel Taylor, in March, sends Beattie a copy of his work on stenography, of which he has just sold the copyright, and adds: "It is to you I owe the success the book has met with, both before and since it was printed, for which the gratitude I owe you can never be sufficiently acknowledged."

1788.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEATTIE AND NON-JURING CLERGYMEN—BISHOP SKINNER.

Agitation against the Slave Trade—Applications to Beattie on the subject—Abridgment of his College Lectures—Goes early to Peterhead—James Hay, with Dr. Laing's assistance, builds an organ—His companionship with his father—Beattie assisting young men—Appointment of his nephew to the Professorship of Natural Philosophy—Death of Prince Charles Edward, and its effect on the Non-juring Clergy—Interview with Bishop Skinner—Extracts from Letters of Mrs. Montagu, Mr. Creech, the Duchess of Gordon, and Mr. Boswell.

IN 1788, Wilberforce was beginning his career as the opponent of the African Slave Trade, and was to bring in a motion on the subject in the House of Commons.

This stirred up all who shared in his views to get up petitions in favour of his motion. The society which had been founded in London "for the purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade," and which disseminated information on the subject all over the country, was increasing in its efforts at this time and was ably seconded by the clergy, the Quakers, and many others; while several important manufacturing towns, such as Birmingham and Manchester, appointed committees to prepare petitions for presentation to Parliament. Not content with petitioning themselves, they brought their influence to bear on all whom they hoped to be able to induce to further the cause.

Beattie had two applications made to him—the first by Dr. Percival, who wrote that the Manchester Committee were "extremely solicitous to avail themselves of the aid and co-operation of the Universities of England and Scotland," and, having no doubt that Beattie concurs with them in reprobating the Slave Trade, hoped he would use his influence with his colleagues and prevail on them to petition against it.

The second was from an anonymous writer, dating from London, and signing himself "Africanus." He is surprised that no body of men in Scotland seems to have taken any steps such as many have done in England to petition the Houses of Legislature against the Slave Trade, more especially as that part of the island has comparatively little concern in the trade. He is, therefore, writing to Beattie "and other eminent men in your Church and Universities" to submit to them whether petitions could not yet be "promoted and expedited so as to be presented to Parliament along with the rest." But he

also hopes from Beattie "that the benevolent spirit which your writings breathe will prompt you in your public writings and discourses to treat the subject as an independent and spirited instructor of youth ought to treat it. I am the more encouraged in this hope when I recollect the spirit and indignation you manifested in your 'Essay on Truth' against the speculative vagaries of some modern metaphysicians; and if I remember rightly you take occasion to mention slavery with just detestation." As to his writing anonymously, he says he is sensible that by doing so his character must appear in a very questionable shape—"must appear, I say, for I am under the mortifying necessity of concealing my name. I am a native of England, and have spent upwards of twenty years in the West Indies and the Southern Colonies (now States) of America. Fate may again command me to those distant barbarous climes, where the sun's setting beam flames on the Atlantic isles. I cannot add 'Tis nought to me,' for I should suffer most severely—not in my character, which I trust is invulnerable—but in my affairs for daring to question what our colonists in general (blinded by the God of this world) regard as their undoubted right—the right of cultivating their lands, I may almost literally say watering them with the tears, with the blood, and manuring them with the famished and lacerated carcasses, of a wretched race of men."

In answer to these appeals, Beattie prepared a petition, which as soon as the College received the sanction of their Chancellor, Lord Bute, was signed and sent up to the House of Commons.

As to the request of "Africanus," that by his teaching he would inspire his students with a detestation of slavery—that he had endeavoured to do for many years past, as may be seen in his "Elements of Modern Science" under the head "Economics," a publication containing an abridgment of his lectures to his class. His teaching on this subject addressed to so many successive classes of young men must have helped to arouse the national conscience, and to pave the way for purging the nation from the national sin.

But Beattie had also, ten years before this, written a Paper on "Slavery," which he now began to revise, and which the Bishop of London was very anxious he should publish along with a pamphlet which had just appeared to prove the lawfulness of the slave trade from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. This was the work of a Spanish Jesuit, who was connected with the slave merchants in Liverpool, by whose means he hoped to obtain preferment in the Church of England, to which he was willing to conform. He had dedicated his pamphlet to the Mayor and Aldermen of Liverpool, and the slave dealers exulted in their champion and said his arguments were unanswerable.

Had his health permitted, Beattie would willingly have undertaken to answer this antagonist, whose work the Bishop of London characterized as mere Jesuitical sophistry, and from what he had himself seen in it, Beattie says, "I should think it an easy matter to answer." But, as to his own Paper, he found it was now out of date.¹ It had been written to evoke the spirit of hostility to the trade which now existed, and to expose abuses which had been partly redressed, so that his zeal and his arguments had become both unnecessary and unseasonable. And re-writing it and answering the Jesuit became an impossibility from his health, which "is a hindrance to all my projects."

Beattie was not sanguine as to the traffic in slaves being stopped at once, nor did he think that the slaves should be freed before they were in some degree prepared to use their freedom aright. "Much good," he writes to Mrs. Montagu, "might be done in the meantime, if planters could be prevailed on to repose less confidence in overseers; to give liberty and wages to their most deserving slaves; to give Christian education to them all, with rest on Sunday; and to teach them to be rational, by treating them as rational beings, and to mitigate the cruelty of punishment and the severity of labour."²

Beattie had, during the winter, begun to prepare an abridgment of his lectures on "Moral Philosophy and Logic," which he at first intended to print, merely for the benefit of his students. Hitherto,

¹ Next year, when Mr. Wilberforce was able himself to speak of the subject in the House of Commons, Beattie found that he confirmed a number of facts he had stated in his Paper on Slavery, of which he had become mistrustful, having forgotten the authorities on which he had recorded them. "The truth is," he writes, "I have been collecting materials on that subject for upwards of twenty-five years; and, as far as my poor voice could be heard, have laboured in pleading the cause of the poor Africans. This, at least, I can say with truth, that many of my pupils have gone to the West Indies, and I trust have carried my principles with them, and exemplified those principles in their conduct to their unfortunate brethren."

² In one of Dr. Percival's letters to Beattie on this subject, the following interesting passage occurs: "In perusing the 'Life of Monsieur Turgot,' by the Marquis de Condorcet, I have been much pleased to find that it was one object of his administration to abolish the infamous traffic in the human species. Monsieur Neckar, in his Treatise on the 'Finances of France,' also speaks of it with execration. But, he observes, the necessity of supporting Sovereign Power has its peculiar laws, and the wealth of nations is one of the foundations of this power. 'Yet would it,' says he, 'be a chimerical project to propose a general compact by which all the European nations should agree to abandon the traffic of African slaves?' I should cordially rejoice to see so honourable a compact in favour of justice, humanity, and freedom. But I believe it may be proved that the wealth of nations, and consequently the sovereign power, sustains real injury from this opprobrious branch of commerce. Liverpool sends out more vessels to the coast of Guinea than all the other ports of England. Yet, of thirty mercantile houses which have carried on nearly the whole of this trade since 1778, twelve have become bankrupts; and of the remainder, several are supposed to have been considerable losers. The truth is, the African trade is a lottery, with a few great and tempting prizes and many blanks."

he had followed the example of his predecessor, Dr. Gerard, and had made his students take down in writing an abstract of his lectures and conversation ; for, he says, he often taught in the Socratic method by question and answer. But these abstracts, being written in haste, were not always correct, and occupied a good deal of time, which he thought might be better employed had they a printed text-book to supply their place. It was because he found that his old students were anxious to procure copies of this work that induced him to publish it when it was finished—which he had hoped would be by the end of the year, but in this he was disappointed.

Through the winter months he had been very well, though troubled in the morning with a cough, which necessitated his son's taking the early hour of teaching. But, during the summer, his old complaints returned in an aggravated form, accompanied by weakness of eyesight and such confusion of thought as often disqualified him, not only for mental occupations, but even for mixing in society. This led to his spending the greater part of the summer at Peterhead, which during this season was very quiet, few visitors resorting to it on account of an epidemic of small-pox in the town.

It was not, however, merely on account of his health that Beattie remained in Peterhead: he had the additional inducement of his son's company. Dr. Laing having been very successful in building an organ for himself, had proposed that James Hay should, with his assistance, build one for Dr. Beattie. To this, seeing that his son was anxious to engage in the work, he had agreed, and during the previous winter Dr. Laing had laid in the wood and other necessary materials, so that everything was ready to allow of a start being made as soon as the session was over.

The organ, the building of which was begun in April, by the end of July "plays very sweetly, and will soon be finished." It proved a great success and a source of much pleasure to its builder and his father during the short time that remained of their companionship in this world.

The tie that bound father and son together was very close, and each year became more so, as the son became the friend and companion, the sharer of both the labours and the relaxations of the father. During the past winter, he had proved himself an able assistant teacher, not confining himself to reading his father's lectures, but already beginning to write some of his own ; and of their amusements Beattie sends an example to Dr. Laing. Of its origin, he says : "There is a song commonly called 'The Soldier's Song,' of which you have a copy ; it begins : 'How stands the glass,' etc. As the tune is a pretty good one, my son and I have long thought that it may be applied to a better purpose than that of a drinking and no very elegant ballad. We both agreed that words should be made for it suitable

to a soldier's situation in the beginning of an engagement. He wrote one verse and I the other. I leave it to you to determine which is mine, and which is his. The tune requires a very irregular stanza, and you will think the structure of it harsh, unless in reading it you take the tune along with you in your mind. You will observe that the corresponding lines are not all in the same measure; but they suit the time for all that, and occasion a variety that is not disagreeable."¹

This summer, indeed, organ-building and botany seemed to have given Beattie less of his son's company than usual; but, meantime, he found other matters requiring his attention. Early in this year, he had been interesting himself much in setting out in life a young man, Mr. Wilson, who had lived much in his family as a companion to his elder son, and a tutor to his younger. Wilson had been bred as a medical man, and went this spring to Jamaica, where a good opening seemed to offer for his beginning practice. For another young man, a deserving old student, Beattie was endeavouring to procure a more lucrative situation than that of parish schoolmaster of Fyvie, with a salary "insufficient to keep body and soul together"; and, in August, a vacancy occurring in Marischal College by the death of Dr. Morgan, Professor of Natural Philosophy, Beattie recommended his nephew to apply for the chair, with the result that he proved the successful candidate. His uncle's influence would certainly tell in his favour, but the young man had proved his ability as Dr. Skene's assistant, and the appointment was amply justified by his after career, and the esteem in which he was held by his students, who at his death erected a monument to him as a mark of their respect and love.

On January 31st of this year, Prince Charles Edward had died; and, as he left no heir to claim the throne, there was now no reason for the existence of a Jacobite party in the kingdom. The Scottish Episcopalians, or Non-jurors as they were styled from their refusing to take the oath of allegiance, now saw no cause for subjecting themselves any longer to the many disabilities and hardships which their loyalty to the Stuart line had brought upon

¹ Here are the lines :—

1. *Forte.*

"Hark ! hark ! the drums afar,
And the loud clarion's angry sound,
Announce the approaching war;
The steeds in thunder bound.
Unfur'd the banners glare on high,
The roar of cannon rends the sky,
And rocks the ground.
And now all around,
Fires flash, smoke whirls, and bullets
fly,
To kill or wound."

2. *Piano.*

"And what if battle's doom
Suppress the youthful warrior's
breath,
Can sloth avoid the tomb?
Can flight escape from death?
Though where we sink in sleep
O'er the green turf no marbles weep,
Nor scutcheon wave;
We ask not such reward.
Fair Fame and smiling virtue guard
The soldier's grave."

them. They announced their willingness to acknowledge King George, and pray for him, and sought to be relieved from the Penal Statutes that had been enacted against them. They did not in this, at first, carry all the members of their flocks along with them—old people clung pathetically to the old traditions. Beattie, writing from Aberdeen to his son, says: "It was told me an hour ago that the Non-jurors are likely to lose many of their people by their loyalty; one Mr. Aiken, a parson in this town, is said to have refused to pray for the King; which it is thought will bring him a prodigious congregation. One poor woman, they say, has cried day and night ever since she heard the King was to be prayed for."

But the former Non-jurors who now took the oath of allegiance also aroused suspicion and opposition in the body of the Episcopalians in Scotland, who had all along acknowledged the Hanoverian line. This body used the English Church Prayer Book, which differs in the Communion service from that which the Scottish Episcopalians use; and they were in the anomalous position of having no Bishop over them. They feared that were the Scottish Bishops sanctioned by law, these would claim jurisdiction over them, enforce the use of the Scottish Communion service, and try to get possession of their chapels, and also of the revenues of the old Scottish Bishoprics.

Beattie's sympathies were with this latter body, to which his friend Dr. Laing belonged; and he seems to have made some move to safeguard their interests through the Bishop of London. This, however, he did not wish to be known, and only confided it to his son, and afterwards to Dr. Laing. Nevertheless, in the course of the summer it became known¹ that he had used his influence in the matter; and the Scottish Episcopalian Church, having never cherished the ambitious aims ascribed to them, or, as the other party averred, finding that they would not be entertained, were anxious to disavow them.

It was evidently for this purpose that Bishop Skinner called on Beattie early in December. Of the interview and conversation Beattie at once wrote to Dr. Laing:—

"ABERDEEN,

"December 12th, 1788.

"This day I had a visit from Bishop Skinner, of the result of which I think it my duty to inform you. That he had heard of . . . interesting myself in a certain cause cannot be doubted, though he did not say he had; for my secret, which I thought quite secure, after the pains I took to conceal it, appears to be perfectly well known in different, and even distant, parts of the country.

¹ As the Bishop of London was to lay Beattie's representations before his brethren, his intercession could not fail to become known.

"The Bishop has entirely satisfied me of the truth of what I always believed, namely, that the Non-jurors have nothing whatever in view, but to obtain a Repeal of the Penal Statutes against them, than which nothing can be more reasonable. They aim at no jurisdiction over you, even as you aim at none over them. They have no eye to your chapels; they have no idea of possessing the revenues of the old Scotch Bishoprics, or any part of them; they wish not to solicit from the legislature anything but to be put on the footing of the other Dissenters from the Established Church of Scotland—that is, on the same footing with you, and the Seceders, and other religious communities, who are not represented in the General Assembly of the Kirk. . . . In a word, Mr. Skinner's conversation was equally modest, candid, and sensible, and gave me very great satisfaction. Nay, to show me how much he was in earnest he put in my hands a copy of the memorial to be presented to the Parliament in behalf of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and a rough draft of the bill which they wished to be brought into Parliament, and desired me to read them, and make any alterations I might think proper. I have glanced them over and think them on the whole very well, but must give them a more attentive perusal. I told him how much I was pleased with the confidence he had reposed in me; that I would do everything in my power to stop the reports that were circulating to the prejudice of his party, meaning those reports of their ambitious views, etc., and that I would let the Bishop of London know what had passed between us. I told him that I was a friend of every society of Christians, and utterly abhorred persecution of whatever sort. He said he knew those were my sentiments ever since he had the honour (as he was pleased to say) to be under my care at College, in the year 1761, the first year of my Professorship."

In Mrs. Montagu's letters of this year, she remarks on various subjects of public interest. Of Warren Hastings'¹ trial she says: "The public attention is now entirely employed on the affair of Mr. Hastings. His accusers have pursued him with a degree of violence and bitterness which, though it may give him pain during his trial, it is imagined will be rather serviceable when his cause is brought to a decision. As the amiable manners of Mr. Hastings in private society, and the high reputation he acquired abroad, have prejudiced me much in his favour, I could not, without much pain, see him brought to the bar, so I have declined going to the trial. All people agree that he appears with the serenity of an innocent man; equally distant from the trepidation of conscious guilt, or the effrontery of undaunted wickedness."

Of Mr. Wilberforce's illness, which prevented his bringing forward his motion on the slave trade, but which Mr. Pitt charged himself

¹ Begun before the House of Lords in Westminster Hall, February 13th, 1788.

with, she says: "You will be sorry that Mr. Wilberforce is in the most dangerous and deplorable state of health. His physicians intend sending him to Hampstead for the air, and Mr. Montagu¹ and his wife are to go with him to nurse and amuse him, as he has not any relations in this part of the world. As Mr. Wilberforce is now in a bad part of Westminster, I am in hopes he may find benefit from the better air of Hampstead; but his mind seems so fitted for a better region than our sin-worn world, I fear we shall not keep him long with us." Before the end of the year, however, these melancholy forebodings were falsified by a great improvement in Mr. Wilberforce's health. Fortunately for the great cause he had espoused, in spite of a weakly constitution, he was spared to carry on his work, and before his death to hear of a bill for the abolition of slavery having passed the second reading in the House of Commons.²

Mrs. Montagu mentions the death of Mrs. Delany, but, in November, all other news sinks into insignificance on account of the concern caused by the illness of the King and the apprehension of all that it may involve. The sorrow seems to have been universal, and the relief great, when, under Dr. Willis's care, the King began to amend, and good hopes were held out by the physicians of a speedy recovery.

Mr. Creech sent Beattie a pamphlet he had lately written, giving an account of the manners and customs of Edinburgh at different periods. On Beattie replying that he had never seen so many curious facts in so small a compass, and that, if Mr. Creech's method were adopted from time to time in other great towns, it might form a sort of register, which would soon become a national benefit, and that he hoped he would have soon many imitators, Creech answered that as yet he had had but one imitation, "from a country parish forty miles from Edinburgh." Among other things, he says: "In 1763 there were two eight-day clocks and three tea-kettles in the parish; in 1783 there were twenty-nine eight-day clocks and ninety tea-kettles." Beattie replies, "Your mention of the clocks and tea-kettles of a country parish near Edinburgh is very curious. In the parish where I was born I remember the time when there were not more than three watches and perhaps as many tea-kettles; there are now, I dare say, upwards of a hundred of both."

Beattie was unable to pay any of his usual visits to his friends this year; but he had a pleasant picture from the Duchess of the life that she was leading at Gordon Castle in the late autumn. "The Duke had been for some days hunting, feasting, and dancing at Banff. We were expected, but a little influenza and a great desire to enjoy the last days of the loveliest season of the year in the

¹ Mrs. Montagu's nephew.

² He died July 29th, 1833.

country, kept us at home. I like to walk amongst the rustling leaves and plan future forests, upon the 'breezy hill that skirts the down.' The account of Huntly from friends and foes is all I could wish. He is now at St. John's, Cambridge, and seems very happy—he has talents for everything; College will determine if he has application, which I am more doubtful of. The surrounding mountains, indeed the plains, are white with snow, but we have no company and are very happy. I and my girls work, and Mr. Hoy reads aloud. I wish you were of the party."

Mr. Boswell thanks Beattie for some contributions to his "Life of Johnson," and adds: "I am in great uneasiness at present on account of my wife, who is very ill with complaints which are alarming as threatening a consumption. I trust you are a believer in the efficacy of prayer, and I beg your pious intercession. Much, much requires explanation; let us wait the great teacher, Death."

During this summer, Beattie removed from the house he had been in for some years, to occupy the one half of Dr. Dun's house.

1789.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BEATTIE'S HEALTH—HIS RELATION TO PRINCIPAL CAMPBELL.

Bad health of Beattie and his sons—James Hay goes to Peterhead—Beattie, accompanied by Miss Valentine and Montagu, goes to Edinburgh—Short stay there—Spends the Summer at Peterhead and improves in health—Agreement with Creech for his Copyright of his "Elements of Moral Science"—Writes his Notes for the Edition of Addison's Prose Works—Subject of correspondence—Restoration of the King's health—The French Revolution—Mrs. Montagu's present to her godson—Mr. Ramsay—Mr. Peckard—Duchess of Gordon—Publication of Dr. Campbell's Gospels—New Buildings for Edinburgh College—The Weather during the course of the year.

As soon as the session was over, they all left Aberdeen in search of health. James Hay, who, after his illness in London, never attempted a long journey, went to Peterhead, while his father, accompanied by Miss Valentine and Montagu, went to Edinburgh. Formerly Beattie had never found the effect of change and the pleasure of meeting his friends fail to restore and revive him, but this year no such happy result ensued. His only desire, after in some degree recovering from the fatigue of the journey, was to get home again, and he merely remained a few days to allow of Montagu's seeing some of the sights of the town and of his consulting Dr. Gregory on his own health. From him he got a regimen, by strictly following which during the summer his health greatly improved. He spent the season in Peterhead, enjoying "profound tranquillity and a longer continuance of good weather than I can remember to have seen in Scotland before."

The first volume of the "Elements of Moral Science" being ready for the press early this year, Beattie entered into treaty with Mr. Creech as to its publication. There was no difficulty as to terms, Creech desiring him to name his own, adding, "I feel a pride in being your publisher, for I love the man and I love his works."¹ But he objected to the book appearing, at any rate at first, in any form but that of a quarto. He seemed to consider it not "respectable" for Beattie's position in the world of letters that a smaller form should be adopted, and he also urged that the quarto would be more lucrative. To this, however, Beattie would not agree. The book was intended chiefly for his students; and for them a quarto would be both too expensive and too bulky. It was printed in

¹ Sir William Forbes agreed with Creech that two hundred guineas was to be the price of the copyright of the two volumes.

octavo, and was put into the hands of Beattie's students in the course of the ensuing session as he had promised.¹

Through Mr. Arbuthnot, Beattie gave his advice as to what was to be included in a new edition of Addison's Prose Works published by Sibbald in conjunction with Creech ; and it was during the year 1789, that he wrote the notes he contributed to it.

In the correspondence of this year, there is frequent reference made to the health of the King, and to the great joy with which the recovery of his reason was hailed. Mrs. Montagu writes, in February : "The best return I can make you for the favour of your letter is the good news I can give you of his Majesty's daily approach to recovery. In walking round his farm the other day he observed the condition of everything like a good farmer, and remembered exactly where his former orders had been well executed, wherein imperfectly, and found fault whenever he found they had been neglected." Mr. Arbuthnot, in March, writes : "I am not surprised at the joy you felt on the King's recovery, an event truly interesting to every good man, and by which many blessings have been restored and many calamities averted. Had there been a Regency, though but for an hour, there was to have been a change of ministry for that time. It is said a hundred persons had subscribed a thousand pounds each, which was to have been presented to Mr. Pitt in the event of his having been deprived of his office."

Of the rejoicings on the occasion, Mrs. Montagu says : "Just in the moment of dejection and dismal apprehension were we saved from the dreaded danger. I really flatter myself that without having suffered the chastisements we feared we shall be amended. The joy, which was universal, seemed chastened and purified in the minds of people of all ranks. In the elegant celebrations of this happy event there appeared less of levity than usual on occasions of public rejoicings amongst the mob ; no riot, drunkenness, or tumult. It gave me inexpressible delight to hear, as I passed in my carriage through the streets to take a view of the illuminations, the common people expressing their joy rather in the tone of Hallelujahs than the vociferations of huzzas. Thanks to God, wishes for his Majesty's health and long life were uttered by every passenger. The first compliment of every one who makes their friend a visit is congratulation on the King's recovery."

As a contrast to the joy at home, her later letters speak of the sad state of France : "I hear the Duke of Dorset says the confusion and bloodshed in France is far beyond what we are informed by our newspapers." On this subject Beattie writes in December, after remarking on the account he had just had of the ecstasies of affection

¹ Soon after its publication, it was translated into Dutch, by Frederick H. Hennert, Professor of Mathematics and Experimental Philosophy in the University of Utrecht.

and loyalty with which the King and Queen had been received on their first appearance at the theatre, and after contrasting the present enviable condition of Great Britain with the wretched condition of some neighbouring nations: "I know not whether the Revolution cleek at the London Tavern have not been too precipitate in their congratulations to the National Assembly at France. They might have deferred that ceremony till their friends on the other side of the Channel had given proof of ability in legislation, as well as of zeal in levelling, and hit upon a better expedient for maintaining the honour and freedom of the French Monarchy (for a monarchy it seems they will still have it to be, and a free one, too) than that of making their King a slave and pointing four hundred pieces of cannon against the walls of his house of bondage. I am afraid our Revolution clubs, instead of commemorating with peacefulness and pious gratitude the glorious era of *the* Revolution, have more at heart to foment a *spirit of revolution* and teach the people that they may, and ought, to overturn the Government whenever demagogues take it into their heads to be dissatisfied or to wish for a change."¹

Mrs. Montagu had hoped that Beattie would have visited her this summer and brought his son Montagu along with him, that she might become acquainted with him. As this could not be, she desired to introduce herself to him "in the shape of a small present;" so when, as usual, remitting through Beattie the annuity she gave to Mrs. Arbuthnot,² she begged him to draw on her banker for a hundred pounds and give it to his boy, adding: "I do not make any apology to you for taking this liberty, as it will not add more than one word to your trouble in writing the draft, and the rest of the affair you have nothing to do with; it is entirely between godmother and godson. He is of an age to be pleased with a trifle, but I cannot flatter myself he will be half as well pleased with receiving as I am with presenting it."

Though never receiving pecuniary help for himself, Beattie did not think he ought to refuse this gift for his child. In the course of his letter of grateful acknowledgment, he remarks: "I have heard you blame Rousseau and others for setting so high a value on money as to refuse any assistance of that kind from those whose patronage they would have been proud to boast of in any other way." To which Mrs. Montagu replied: "I do most heartily detest Rousseau for the injury of his doctrine to those who have more money than they want and to those who have less. I do not see why the same principle that should make me disdain to receive a pecuniary benefit from a person richer than myself should not make me equally disdain

¹ In the letters published by Sir William Forbes, Beattie frequently alludes to the progress of the French Revolution.

² This year she increased the amount of Mrs. Arbuthnot's annuity.

to receive instruction from some other person who is wiser than myself. From good authority we are told *wisdom is better than gold*, but Jean Jacques Rousseau is not of that opinion, or he would not accept the one and reject the other. Milton, who had a more enlarged mind, makes use of the phrase *acceptance bounteous*. I have ever admired the expression, for the niggard, cold, unfriendly heart refuses to receive, from principles, that in another situation would decline to give. The custom of presents to godchildren has been so long established that this minute moralist durst not invade it, so *malgré* Jean Jacques I shall now and then avail myself of the god-mother's privilege, and so you may tell my godson."

An old friend of Beattie, Mr. Ramsay, wrote in March thanking him and his son for the kindness they had shown his nephew during his course of study at Marischal College, which was now finished. The young man was to study for the English Church, and had to attend one of the English Universities in order to get a degree. But, as Mr. Ramsay considered neither Oxford nor Cambridge particularly fitted for the study of theology, he intends that his nephew should prosecute that study at home, and begs Beattie to draw out a course of reading for him, or procure one from some one else.

Mr. Ramsay was a North-country man, a native of Fraserburgh, and had been a student at King's College, Aberdeen, at the same time as Beattie was studying at Marischal College. Their acquaintance dated from those early days, and had continued through life, though their lots had been cast widely apart. Mr. Ramsay had been long in the West Indies, and, on his return to Britain, was presented to the living of Teston, in Kent.

He was one of the first to call public attention to the horrors of slavery, and, after coming to England, published a book on the subject, which brought upon him much persecution and obloquy from those interested in upholding the system. This never damped his zeal in the cause, and he concluded this letter to Beattie by saying he is hastening to town by desire of Mr. Wilberforce to assist in arranging matters for the abolition of the slave trade, "in which I am sure we have your good wishes."

While thus employed, he died in London, on July 20th, in the house of his friend and patron, Sir Charles Middleton, from some complaint, "the effect," his nephew writes, "of too close application exerted (notwithstanding the most illiberal and abusive attacks) in the laudable cause of humanity." This was not alone his nephew's opinion. Beattie fully shared in it, and the Bishop of London wrote: "He has died a martyr to a noble cause." After his death, Beattie did what he could for his nephew by recommending him to the notice of the Bishop of London.

Beattie, in fulfilment of a promise to the Duchess of Gordon, had

written to his old friend, Mr. Peckard, who had been so instrumental in procuring him his Oxford degree, and who was now at the head of one of the Colleges in Cambridge, to introduce to him the young Marquis of Huntly, who had just gone to Cambridge to study. In his reply, Mr. Peckard, now an old man, gives an account of what had befallen him since Beattie and he had met; and of his present position he says: "About eight years since I was entrusted with the care of a College which had been neglected by my predecessor, and really was in a state very near to ruin. I endeavoured to discharge my duty as well as I could. I made it known that I considered an University not as a place of dissipation and expense, but of economy and education. I also considered that I had young men under my care, and recollected that I had been young myself; therefore, in the rules I laid down, I made all allowances consistent with my duty to the parents and guardians who had trusted their young men to my care. My regulations, requiring strict attention at lectures, hall and chapel, and the absolute prohibition of all excursions to Newmarket, were, however, by some thought too hard; I was told that the times would not bear them; that I should ruin my College. Nevertheless, though when I came not a fourth part of my rooms were inhabited, yet now I have not a single room empty; and my admissions are at least in the proportion of three to one, compared with the admissions before I came. These things I mention not as commending myself, but to show that, notwithstanding many horrible proofs of general depravity, the world perhaps is not so bad as it was sometimes thought to be. As to the general system of education at Cambridge, I cannot entirely approve it. I wish less was given to mathematical, and more to classical, moral and religious instruction; but I know too well, by woeful experience, the consequence of attempting to be a reformer, and therefore have done with all beyond my own immediate and proper sphere of action. With respect to myself and those under me—

"*Quid verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.*"

Twice in the course of the autumn and winter the Duchess of Gordon urged Beattie and his son to visit them at Gordon Castle, invitations they were unable to accept. The Duke and Duchess seem to have spent this winter at the Castle, as Mr. Gordon, of Cluny, writes from Edinburgh:—

"*December 8rd.*

"The Duchess of Gordon left this place for Gordon Castle yesterday morning, and seems determined to pass the winter there. I said everything in my power to confirm her Grace in that resolution; and all her true friends will, I flatter myself, be of my opinion. Her residence in the North is not only for the good of her own family, but of the country in general, where she promotes a spirit of mirth

and hospitality to a degree beyond any person I know. I never saw her in greater beauty than she is just now."

It was in the beginning of this year that Dr. Campbell's new translation of the Gospels with Preliminary Dissertations and Notes was at last published. Beattie writes of it to Mrs. Montagu: "I carefully read the whole in manuscript, and wrote many a sheet of remarks and criticism upon it, and have no scruple to say that it is one of the most important publications in theology, if not *the most important* that has appeared in my time. It will give the public, at least the rational part of the public, a very high idea of the learning, acuteness, industry, candour and piety of the author, who is my next neighbour, and with whom I have lived, in the same society, upon the most intimate terms, for almost thirty years. It is about forty years since he engaged in this important work, and yet I am afraid he will not get so much by it as Mr. Sheridan did by 'The Comedy of the Duenna.'"

On November 23rd, Mr. Arbuthnot writes of the laying of the foundation stone of the new College buildings in Edinburgh: "You would see in the newspapers some very splendid paragraphs on laying the foundation stone of a new College. There are already a very numerous list of subscriptions to a considerable amount; yet, as it is said that it will cost a hundred thousand pounds, I doubt without great assistance from Government it will not soon be completed; however, much aid from that quarter is expected."

The weather during the year seems to have been very variable. It was exceptionally good up to September; but, before the crops had been secured, "such deluges of rain as were never seen before here set in, that the crops, particularly the oats, suffered greatly"; while again, in December, the Duchess of Gordon writes: "A more lovely month cannot be than this same December."

1790.

CHAPTER XXV.

JAMES HAY BEATTIE'S DEATH.

James Hay Beattie's illness and death—His father writes a Memoir of him, and prints, it with a Collection of his Writings, for private circulation.

It was during the year 1790 that Beattie was called on to part with his son James, who had from his birth been the object of his watchful and loving care, and who so well repaid that care by fulfilling his father's highest hopes, both as to his talents and as to his character.

During the previous November, a young relative, who had lived in Beattie's family from his childhood, died in his house of a lingering complaint. His death had caused them all much concern—to Montagu, who had never before come in contact with death, such great grief that his father was afraid that it would hurt his health. James's sorrow was of course more moderate and rational, but his health, now never very good, was seriously affected by a cold which he caught by getting up during the night to attend on his dying friend. From the effects of this cold he never recovered. His father describes him as being in "a declining way" during the winter, but adds that "he has no cough, very little positive pain, and he has good spirits." His freedom from cough seems to have deceived not only his father but his physicians as to the true nature of his disease. In addition to Dr. Skene in Aberdeen, and Dr. Laing in Peterhead, Dr. James Gregory in Edinburgh was consulted during the whole course of his illness: at this time, he considered it a nervous atrophy—a dangerous but not incurable complaint.

Early in spring, at his own earnest request, and with the approval of his medical advisers, James went to Peterhead, accompanied by his father, his brother, and Miss Valentine. There it was their intention to remain until the season for goat-whey, when they were to remove to some place where this remedy could be easily procured, fondly hoping that it would perfect his recovery.

But as weeks passed, and instead of gaining he was evidently losing ground, the idea that recovery was doubtful seems at last to have presented itself to his father. But there were still none of the usual symptoms of consumption, when, in June, he wrote to Sir William Forbes: "I little thought that his disorder would have continued so long, or was likely to have so serious consequences; and till lately everybody who saw him was of the same opinion. . . . He has tolerable spirits, and converses with as much readiness and

acuteness as ever, and sometimes with his usual jocularly. But his bodily weakness is very great, and he is exceedingly emaciated. Three months ago he could walk three miles without fatigue ; now, even when leaning on my arm, he can hardly walk half a mile at the slowest pace."

About this time, Beattie found that his son had taken a great liking to attempt a journey, saying he never before had so great a desire to go from home and see a succession of strange places. This greatly pleased his father ; as he had found change of scene always beneficial to himself, he hoped it would prove equally so to his son. But he dreaded removing him from under the eye of a medical man, and his first concern was to find some young practitioner to accompany them on their travels. It so happened that his son's early companion, Mr. Wilson, had lately returned from Jamaica, on account of his health, and was at this time settled in Fraserburgh as partner to the medical man there. To him Beattie applied, and found him so eager to devote himself to his old friend that he would allow no obstacle to prevent his doing so ; and as his partner refused at first to accept Beattie's liberal offer to indemnify him for his loss, declared he would leave without his consent. To this, of course, Beattie would not agree ; but, after a while, the difficulty was got over,¹ and Mr. Wilson remained in close attendance on his friend till his death.

But his services as a travelling companion were never required. Sir William Forbes had begged that the party would make his house in Edinburgh one of their resting places, and was expecting their arrival in the beginning of July, when he heard from Beattie that instead of their being on the way to accept his hospitality as he had hoped, "it had pleased Providence to remove that event to I know not how great a distance."

Within the previous fortnight, his son had become much weaker, and the dreaded cough had at last appeared. Whereupon Beattie immediately resolved, with the approval of the doctor, to bring his son home ; and this he was obliged to do by sea, as James was now too weak to bear the fatigue of a land journey. For the purpose he hired a little sloop, and after a rather stormy passage, from which the invalid seems to have suffered less than the rest of the party, they reached Aberdeen in safety.

For a while after their return, James seemed to improve in strength, which led to the proposal of his trying the effect of another sea voyage. A larger and more comfortable vessel was engaged for several weeks, so that there should be no necessity either for setting sail or prolonging a voyage, but in accordance with the strength of the invalid. On a fine morning, with a favourable wind, they

¹ Seemingly, by Dr. Laing's mediation.

embarked, hoping to be able to reach Montrose ; but they had not gone far when the wind changed, and on their attempting to make way by tacking, James became so alarmingly sick that they had to return ; and no further attempt was made to remove him from home.

After this, the complaint followed its usual course of gradually increasing weakness, not in this case aggravated by any severe suffering ; till, on the 19th of November, he passed peacefully away.

Two incidents of his last days show the mutual relations of father and son. Shortly after they came from Peterhead, Beattie wrote to Sir William Forbes : "I mentioned my son's gratitude for what he calls my goodness to him. His whole life has been what I may call one continued exertion of this gratitude ; but of late I have had many more affecting instances of it. A few days ago, while I was sitting by him, he began to say some very warm things to that purpose ; and when I wished him to waive the subject he, with his eyes swimming in tears, and a voice almost inarticulate with affection and tenderness, implored the blessing of Heaven upon me with a solemnity and a fervour which I can never forget, and which even at this moment overpowers me to think of."

On the 12th of November, Beattie wrote to Dr. Laing : "I this day began my Prelections to my class by reading a discourse of my son's composing. Think what I felt while I read it ! I endeavoured to exclude for a time every tender thought, but it would not do ; however I got through it pretty well. I had nothing of my own to say that was half so much to the purpose ; and I thought (if I should suppress it) that I would be guilty of disrespect to him, though he will never know anything of the matter, as well as of an injury to my young men. Some sentiments in it, strongly expressive of piety, and some very striking remarks on the value of time and the uncertainty of human life, it was extremely difficult for me to read with an articulate voice."

Beattie intimated the death of his son to his friends in a few brief notes. To Mr. Arbuthnot, who more particularly shared in his love and admiration of James, he wrote : "My son left us this morning at seven ; his death was without pain, and he retained the full use of his rational faculties to the last moment. He had been expecting death for a considerable time past, and expected it with such calmness and pious resignation as cannot be exceeded. His long illness he bore in the same exemplary manner ; and except when he bade his brother farewell, and occasionally when he broke out into passionate expressions of gratitude to me, never shed a tear. He has left a number of papers ; but it will be some time before I can harden my heart so as to be able to examine their contents. Considering his years,¹ he certainly came nearer to a perfect

¹ At his death, James Hay Beattie was twenty-two years and thirteen days old.

character than any other person I have known. I am, I thank God, entirely resigned to the will of Providence."

To Sir William Forbes, he added: "I have many sources of consolation; the chief of which is my persuasion that an eternity of happiness is before him. His piety from his childhood was ardent and rational. I never knew any person more anxious than he was to do good to his fellow creatures."

Sir William Forbes, in his "Life of Beattie," says: "Dr. Beattie bore the loss of his son with singular fortitude and resignation. Yet although his grief was not clamorous, it was not the less severe; and that beautiful line of his own 'Hermit' might most aptly be applied to him—

"'He thought as a sage though he felt as a man:'"

As soon as the last duties were paid to his son, he wisely turned to the fulfilment of his daily duties as being not only the true way of showing his acceptance of God's will, but also the best for regaining peace and tranquillity of spirit. In a letter written to Dr. Laing on December 14th, he best describes his feelings and the occupations of his leisure hours at this time: "I know you are anxious to hear from me, and I wish, as I have much to say, to write to you a long letter; but that is not in my power at present. There is only one subject on which I can think; and my nerves are so shattered and my mind feels (if I may so express myself) so sore, that I can hardly attend to anything. You may be sure that to the will of God I am perfectly resigned; and in the late dispensation of His Providence I see innumerable instances of the Divine benignity, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful. Mr. — would tell you many particulars which I need not recapitulate. Since the last duty was paid, I have three times a day attended my business in the College; the doing of which is in the present circumstances painful and laborious, but perhaps salutary. I have very kind letters of condolence from all my friends. I know not whether you will as a physician approve of what I am doing at my hours of leisure—writing an account of the life, character, education, and literary proficiency, of our departed friend. I sometimes think it gives relief to my mind and soothes it. At any rate it is better than running into company in order to drive him as much as possible out of my remembrance. With all the tenderness that writing on such a subject necessarily occasions, it yields also many consolations so pleasing, that for the world I would not part with them. I know not what I shall do with this narrative when it is finished. I have thoughts of printing a few copies of it, and sending them to my particular friends. I have ordered a marble slab to be erected over his grave, with an inscription of which I enclose a copy. In some things I think it falls below the truth, but rises in nothing above it,

so far as I can judge. Monumental inscriptions I consider as belonging not to poetry but to history; the writers of them should give the truth, if possible the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I wrote this inscription in Latin, thinking that language more suitable than English to his character as a scholar and philosopher. The papers he has left are many; but few of them finished. In little notes and memoranda, some Latin, and some English, I find strokes of character greatly to his honour, forms of devotion, pious resolutions, hints for writing essays, etc."

This Memoir of his son, when finished in January of the following year, Beattie printed for private circulation, inscribing it to his friends Mr. Gordon, of Cluny, Sir William Forbes, Mr. Arbuthnot, and Major Mercer.¹ To it he added a collection of his son's writings, under the title "Essays and Fragments, by James Hay Beattie." In making this collection, Sir William Forbes thought Beattie erred in including many little pieces which had been written merely for the entertainment of the family circle, but were not worthy of being preserved, and he told his friend so. Beattie, however, determined to retain the pieces objected to, and gives his reason for doing so in his prefatory remarks to the collection; in which he says he "wished to give such proofs as could be had, and might be published, of the various talents of the author; and for the sake of example, to show that though studious and learned, he was neither austere nor formal, and that in him the strictest piety and modesty were united with the utmost cheerfulness, and even playfulness, of disposition."

Of his own loss in being deprived of such a son, and of the source from which he derived consolation under his bereavement, Beattie speaks in the concluding paragraph of the Memoir: "I have lost the pleasantest, and for the last four or five years of his short life, one of the most instructive companions that ever man was delighted with. But—THE LORD GAVE; THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY: BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD. I adore the Author of all good, who gave him grace to lead such a life, and die such a death, as makes it impossible for a Christian to doubt of his having entered upon an inheritance of a happy immortality."

¹ In 1799, as he found an unauthorized copy had been printed and sold, it was published in London for sale, by Beattie's authority, as a second volume to an edition of his own poetical works.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BEATTIE AND HIS SON GO TO LONDON.

Beattie's other troubles at the time of his son's illness and death—Principal Campbell's illness and unexpected recovery—Duchess of Gordon and other friends urge Beattie's going to London for change of scene—This he does after the College Session is over, taking Montagu along with him—His anxiety about the boy's future—Spends a month at Fulham Palace with the Bishop of London—Interview with Mr. Pitt—There he meets Miss Hannah More—His son, who desires to become a Clergyman in the Church of England, confirmed by the Bishop—Goes to Bath on account of his health—Meets Mr. Wilberforce—Visits Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford—On return to Scotland, spends the Autumn at Peterhead, and pays a visit at Gordon Castle—Death of Mrs. Gordon, of Cluny—Extracts from Letters on French Revolution—Burke's Reflections on it—Sir Joshua Reynolds, etc.

It is a common saying that "misfortunes never come singly." At first sight, this arrangement of Providence seems an aggravation of human sorrow; but, looking more closely, we may see both its wisdom and its mercy. When we are overwhelmed by some great grief, and dwell on it alone, no joyful or pleasant event would rouse us from brooding over it; such an event, from its glaring contrast to our feelings, would but add to our sorrow and would seem a mockery; whereas another trouble demands our attention, and forces our thoughts into another channel, thus relieving the mental tension, and reminding us that we have other interests and duties, as well as blessings still to be thankful for. Both during his son's illness and after his death Beattie had experience of this painful but salutary prevention of the indulgence of an excessive and exclusive grief.

At the time when the hopelessness of his son's recovery first dawned upon him, he had renewed trouble and anxiety about his wife. She was still at Musselburgh under the care of a medical man, and watched over by Sir William Forbes, in as comfortable circumstances as it was possible at that time for any one in her mental condition. But foolish friends thought otherwise, and would not be convinced that freedom from excitement and a quiet life were best for her, and, seeing Beattie engrossed with his son, they thought it a favourable opportunity for trying to effect a change. Fortunately, he was led to suspect their design, and wrote to Sir William Forbes to warn him of it and to beg of him to frustrate it. This he

was happily able to do, but not before Beattie had experienced much anxiety.¹

In January, about the time he had finished writing the Memoir of his son, his thoughts were prevented from dwelling on him by the alarming illness of his most intimate friend in Aberdeen, Principal Campbell. No one but Beattie himself had any hope of his recovery ; and for this hope he said he had no other ground than that he wished for it, and thought "he had not the look of a dying man—for I have all my life been studious of physiognomy, and have had too many opportunities of attending to this melancholy part of it."

The Principal himself shared the general belief that he would not recover, as Beattie writes : "Finding his end approaching he has sent for me twice, and honoured me with some directions about the republication of some of his writings. He said, among other things, that he hoped and wished I might be his successor.² His death will be a great loss to us all ; to me an irreparable one." But he was spared this additional sorrow, and writes of Dr. Campbell's recovery to Sir William Forbes :—

"ABERDEEN,
"January 31st, 1791.

"Principal Campbell's disorder has taken an unexpected and very favourable turn. I sat with him half an hour to-day and found to my inexpressible satisfaction that his fever is gone, that he has little to complain of, and that he now begins to have hopes of recovery. I have seldom seen him more cheerful, and he would have talked much more than I would have allowed him to do. Few things have ever happened to me in life that gave me more satisfaction than the prospect of his recovery. It is a blessing to the public, of inestimable benefit to Marischal College, and to me a very singular mercy. In consequence of it I feel my heart more disengaged and light than it has been these many long months. May God confirm his recovery and preserve him ! The physicians both entertain sanguine hopes. You, my dear sir, and I, have seen several instances of the power of Christianity in triumphing over death. I saw many instances of it on a late occasion that nearly affected me. I must give you a little anecdote which Mrs. Campbell told me to-day : at a time when Dr.

¹ In one of his letters to Sir W. Forbes on this business, Dr. Beattie says of his niece, Miss Valentine : "I have read this letter to my niece, who approved of every word of it. I mention this because her affection to me and my family is unbounded, and because she has more consideration and more sense than any other person of her age and sex that I have ever been acquainted with." And, in a letter to her mother, he says of her that his son James, when thinking that his end was near, "could not bear the thought of her going away from him, even for a very short time."

² This wish was shared by Beattie's friends, and in influential circles he was thought of as Principal Campbell's most suitable successor.

Campbell seemed to be just expiring, and had told his wife and niece that it was so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to give him relief. As soon as he was able to speak he said that he wondered to see their countenances so melancholy and covered with tears, in the apprehension of his departure. 'At that instant,' said he, 'I felt my mind in such a state in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution that I can express my feelings in no other way than by saying that I was *in a rapture*.' The feelings of such a mind as Dr. Campbell's in such an awful moment, when he certainly retained the full use of all his faculties, deserve to be attended to. When will an infidel die such a death ?"

At the time of his son's death, both the Duke and Duchess of Gordon had written to Beattie sympathizing with him in his sorrow, and the Duchess had urged his coming to London at once for change of scene. This she considered very necessary for him ; and, among other arguments to induce him to comply with her request, she again speaks of Mr. Pitt's appreciation of his poems, of which he often repeated favourite lines, adding : "Come and enjoy his society ; he will with joy join with your other friends in giving you all the comforts society and friendship can bestow. I know your mind revolts at the idea, but I hope, trust, and pray, that you will set out."

Though neither his duty nor his inclination permitted Beattie to accede to the Duchess's request at this time, he determined to do so later on. To this he was led by the wishes of his friends and the hope of improving his own health, but chiefly by anxiety about his remaining son. Having paid what he considered a merited tribute to the son that he had lost, his surviving son's future was now his chief anxiety, more especially as the feebleness of his own health made him fear lest he should be soon deprived of a father's care. To Mrs. Montagu, who had shown so great an interest in the boy from his birth, and who was urging him to bring him to Sandleford, that she might become personally acquainted with him, Beattie naturally confided all his anxieties on his son's account. He told her that, in case of his death, he had nominated herself, her nephew, the Bishop of London, Sir William Forbes, and several others as guardians (or, as they are called in Scotland, Tutors and Curators) of his boy, and to them he had entrusted the care of his education as a clergyman of the Church of England, the profession which for several years he had persisted in preferring to any other, and "which I assure you, Madam, is entirely his own choice." After giving her some account of the boy's character and advance in his studies, he says : "He is now in his thirteenth year, and if he and I live till next November he will be entered a student of Marischal College." Mrs. Montagu replied : "I feel myself much honoured by

the trust you repose in me, and should my life be prolonged beyond the date of yours, I will to the last moment of mine exert every power to serve him. I hope you will be able to come to London and bring my dear young friend, and we may consult with the Bishop of London on the plan of his education."

It was not without considerable effort that Beattie braced himself up to the resolution of undertaking the long journey to London, for which he felt physically very unfit.

Early in spring, his niece had been called to Montrose to attend on her parents, who were both ill, and Beattie had accompanied her as far as Stonehaven. In this short journey, he found the jolting of the carriage increased the pain in his side, and fatigued him so much that he wrote to her: "If the other roads in Great Britain were as bad as these I should no more think of going from home;" but, as that was not so, "I do still hope to set out on my southern expedition at the proper time; it is become so necessary that I *must* attempt it."

When Montagu and he did set out, in the middle of April, their progress was very slow. They remained in Edinburgh for three weeks, and did not reach London till towards the end of May. There they took up their abode with Mr. Williamson, who was still in London, but did not remain with him long. From the day they left Aberdeen till they reached London, the weather had been cold and stormy; but then suddenly it became unsupportably hot, accompanied by east wind. This combination, along with the stifling atmosphere of London, seemed to deprive Beattie of all the little strength of which he was possessed. The Bishop of London, on coming into town to see him, found him so weak that he insisted on his accompanying him at once to Fulham, which in those days was quite a *country* residence. Beattie describes the Palace as a noble and venerable mansion, five miles from town, on the brink of the Thames, and situated on a spacious lawn, with rows of majestic elms and oaks.

Here he remained for a month, during which time his health decidedly improved, while he had the pleasure of renewing acquaintance with some old friends, and of making some new ones.

Among the latter, were Miss Hannah More and Mr. Horace Walpole. Miss More and Beattie had long been known to each other by report, but had never met till now, when, as guests of the Bishop of London, at Fulham, they had an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted. Her sympathy with him in his sorrow for the death of his son, and the interest she took in the writings he had left, served to give a tenderness to their friendship which would have been wanting had they met in other circumstances.

Writing to Sir William Forbes, he says: "She is one of the most agreeable women I know." To his niece, he says: "Miss Hannah More has read over all my son's papers, and is much gratified, she

says, and surprised at his extraordinary variety of talents. Miss More joins uncommon abilities to the greatest modesty and simplicity of manner. She left us yesterday, to our very great regret."

Of Miss More's feelings towards Beattie we get some idea from a letter written, four years after they had met at Fulham, by Mrs. Forbes, of Seaton, who, on going to Bath, had got an introduction to her from Beattie. After remarking that Miss More's great politeness and attention to her showed in what high esteem she held his recommendation, she gives an account of one of Miss More's social parties, to which she had been invited, where she "found a circle of good company in the best sense of the word. There are four more sisters, some very clever, and all, I believe, above the common run. You, of course, were brought in, and it is hard to say whether she who has seen you, or those who have not, admire you most. 'Oh! Mrs. Forbes,' said one, 'you know the sweetest poet now living! . . .' In short, I shall not repeat all that was said—this, however, I will tell you, because I believe it must be acceptable to your feeling heart, that your friend Miss More called all attention away from the poet and philosopher to the *father*—you may judge the subject."

With Mr. Walpole Beattie had much conversation, and of him he remarks: "He is an agreeable man, perfectly well bred, and of pleasant discourse; but it pains one to see him so universally martyred by the gout, both in his hands and feet."

Of old friends, with whom he renewed acquaintance, he mentions Viscount Cremorne (formerly Lord Dartrey), Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, "who, notwithstanding her age, is still an elegant woman." "I was happy," he adds, "to find them all well, and very little altered in their appearance. Such renewals of friendship are very pleasing."

He also spent a day at Bushey Park with Lord North, now Lord Guildford, who in 1773 had kindly interested himself in obtaining his pension. This renewed intercourse with him was owing to the marriage of his friend, Mr. Sylvester Douglas, to Lady Catherine North, Lord Guildford's eldest daughter. As Beattie's health had obliged him to decline dining with Mr. Douglas in London, Lady Catherine had sent him a message from her father saying he hoped to see him at Bushey Park, and Mr. Douglas at the same time begged he would time his visit so as to meet him and his wife there. This meeting now took place, and gave Beattie much pleasure. He found his friend's bride a most agreeable woman; and of Lord Guildford, who was now quite blind, he says: "He is in perfect health and spirits, and retains all his wonted vivacity and good-humour, of which he indeed possesses an uncommon share." The Duchess of Gordon had left London just as Beattie had arrived, much to the regret of both parties. She had hoped to have provided for him several opportunities of meeting Mr. Pitt; but,

while Beattie was at Fulham, an interview was arranged, probably by the Bishop, who was on intimate terms with the great statesman.

He writes to Sir William Forbes of this interview :—

"June 30th.

"Last week I made a morning visit to Mr. Pitt. I had heard him spoken of as a grave and reserved man, but saw nothing of it. He gave me a very frank and indeed affectionate reception ; and was so cheerful, and in his conversation so easy, that I almost thought myself in the company rather of an old acquaintance than of a great statesman. He was pleased to pay me some very obliging compliments, asked about my health, and how I meant to pass the summer ; spoke of the Duchess of Gordon, the improvements of Edinburgh, and various other matters ; and when I told him I knew not what apology to make for intruding upon him, said that no apology was necessary, for that he was very glad to see me, and desired to see me again."

Before leaving London, Beattie had dined with Mrs. Montagu, and the long-talked-of introduction of young Montagu to his godmother had taken place. She had given him "as affectionate a reception as if he had been her own son, and seemed to be—indeed, she told me she was—much pleased with his appearance and behaviour."

To his elder brother's shyness and reserve in society, Montagu's ease and vivacity were a great contrast. He was, indeed, a very bright and lovable boy from his earliest childhood.¹ Without forwardness, yet without embarrassment, young Montagu soon made himself quite at home with his father's London friends. "Everybody he has seen is kind to him, and he very soon becomes acquainted wherever he is," his father remarks when writing to friends at home.

On the Bishop of London and Mrs. Porteus, the boy made an equally favourable impression. They became very fond of him ; and he, "as usual, is intimately acquainted with them, and I believe with every person in the family. His Lordship and he sometimes ride together and sometimes walk. Yesterday the Bishop took him to the House of Lords, where he heard the King deliver his speech, and saw the prorogation of Parliament."

The Bishop, knowing the boy's partiality to the Church of England, proposed to confirm him if his father had no objection ;

¹ Miss Valentine, under whose care he so often spent the summer months at Montrose, in after years used to amuse her own children with anecdotes of his early sayings and doings, by which, however, she was occasionally placed in rather awkward predicaments. To both her young cousins she was tenderly attached ; and such had been the impression left upon her by their great abilities, that her own children, who were by no means wanting in ordinary talents, complained she had little patience with what she considered their stupidity, compared with the young Beatties.

and, his consent being given, the ceremony took place privately before they left Fulham.¹

This they did about the end of June, and, after spending a few days in London went to Sandleford, where Mrs. Montagu was now settled for the summer. On their way there, Beattie spent a day at Windsor to pay his respects to the King and Queen, and to see some old friends, among them Dr. Heberden, who, seeing how ill he still was, strongly advised his trying the waters at Bath. This advice, which the Bishop of London, Miss More, and others had already urged upon him, he determined to follow; and, after spending a fortnight with Mrs. Montagu, he proceeded to Bath. Of the result of his stay there he writes to the Duchess of Gordon: "By the advice of I know not how many persons, I went to Bath; but soon found that I must either leave it or run the utmost hazard of being both choked with the air of the place and poisoned with the water—the hot water, I mean, for the cold fountain water is the best I ever tasted. I drank of the hot pump according to the advice given me by Dr. Fraser; but, when I mentioned the effects it had upon my constitution, both he and Dr. Falconer advised me to leave Bath directly. I cannot regret my journey to Bath, though it did harm, and no good, to my bodily health; for there I found some very agreeable friends, particularly Mr. Wilberforce, to whom I introduced myself, and who knew me before I told him my name. He justly merits the character he bears with all parties, for he is without exception as agreeable and as worthy a man as I ever met. He and I left Bath the same day; but took, I scarce know how, different roads, he going by Devizes and I by Chippenham; however, we met in the evening at Mrs. Montagu's at Sandleford." Beattie remained with Mrs. Montagu till the end of July, when greatly to her regret he left, as he was anxious to get home on Miss Valentine's account. She was far from well, and he thought the best remedy for her, and perhaps for them all, as Montagu seems to have been ailing, was the bracing air and quiet of Peterhead.

Beattie had been so little in London, and when there had been so ill, that, to his own and their regret, he had seen little of his friends. Two notes of invitation from Sir Joshua Reynolds are preserved, in the latter of which this regret is expressed:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I wish you and your son would dine with me to-day; you will meet two or three of your friends. Pray come if you can; consider we have scarce seen each other."

¹ Beattie had left London in the beginning of June on account of the great heat. On June 18th, he writes: "Our violent heat was succeeded by so violent cold, that in the space of a few hours the thermometer in the shade fell from eighty to forty, and ice was actually seen on the pools. If it were not for the verdure of the trees, one would think it was November."

It does not appear whether he was able to have this meeting with his friends. After leaving Sandleford, he was but three days in London; and, after a short stay at Fulham to bid the Bishop farewell, he left for Scotland. He took the journey very slowly, spent ten days in Edinburgh, and, having been joined by his niece at Montrose, reached Peterhead in the beginning of September. From there, Beattie was able to go to Gordon Castle for a short visit before returning to Aberdeen towards the end of October.

During his stay in England, his friend, Mr. Gordon, of Cluny, had most unexpectedly lost his wife, whom Beattie had seen in Edinburgh in perfect health. The Duchess of Gordon had written to him of their friend's inconsolable grief, and his desire had been to go to him at once on his return to London; but he found he was neither in Edinburgh, nor, when he came North, at Cluny. He had felt that a letter would be only an intrusion in the early stage of a grief such as Mr. Gordon's; but, having failed to see him, he wrote a few lines from Peterhead. Mr. Gordon replied: "Your letter proves your sensibility and your knowledge of the human frame. Persons who suffer such overwhelming calamities as I have done, are not objects of consolation, which many have attempted in vain. They are the wretched objects merely of prayer and pity, and their composure is to be obtained by prayer alone; for their sufferings are beyond the remedy of wealth or power, or any earthly advantage whatever. My calamity is so weighty and overwhelming that I resign all hopes of happiness or enjoyment, and wish only for a small degree of relief from that distraction of mind and that agonising sorrow that perpetually haunt me. It is to Heaven only that I look for such relief, and my expectations would be greatly strengthened by the sentiments and conversation of a person so learned and pious as you are. It will be a charity, therefore, as well as friendship, when your occasions admit of it, and you hear that I am at this place, to come to me."

This Beattie again attempted to do on his return to Aberdeen, but found, to their mutual regret, that Mr. Gordon was absent at the time when Beattie could have left Aberdeen before the beginning of the College session.

The following are extracts from the correspondence of 1790 and 1791:—

FROM MRS. MONTAGU.

"*March 16th, 1790.*

"The resistance of our Parliament to all innovations and adherence to former establishments has given general joy and satisfaction; and it seems as if we should not catch the infection of revolt which has spread its baneful influence over the Continent. Our public papers are silent upon the ravages and murders daily committed in the French provinces, but by private letters one is informed of them.

I saw a letter from a person of fashion near Montauban the other day, in which it is related that a fortnight past, in the environs of that city, twenty castles have been demolished, and all the grain and flour stored up in them burned. They have burnt many women and girls, pillaged chapels, and threatened to destroy L'hôtel de Ville, which belongs to the order of Malta. No less than five provinces are in this condition of violence and confusion. A general bankruptcy is expected in Paris, and you will find by the newspapers the National Assembly does not make any progress towards a settled Government. I wish our Patriots who sent them their congratulations were obliged to go and partake of their condition. Happily for us these countrymen of ours cannot bring confusion and anarchy hither."

Burke's famous "Reflections on the Revolution in France" appeared in 1790; and, in reply to the question of the Duchess of Gordon as to what he thought of it, Beattie wrote:—

"March 7th, 1790.

"After the patient hearing which your Grace has done me the honour to grant to several of my opinions, I presume you will not be at a loss to guess what I think of Mr. Burke's book on the French Revolution. I wished the French nation very well; I wished their Government reformed, and their religion; I wished both to be according to the British model; and I know not what better things I could have wished them. But (with the skill and temper of that surgeon who, in order to alleviate the toothache, should knock all his patient's teeth down his throat) they, instead of reforming Popery, seem to have resolved upon the abolition of Christianity; instead of amending their Government they have destroyed it; and instead of advising their King to consult his own and his people's dignity by making law the rule of his conduct, they have used him much more cruelly than our Charles I. was used; they have made him a prisoner and a slave.

"They will have a democracy, indeed, and no aristocracy! They know not the meaning of the words. A democracy, in which *all* men are supposed to be perfectly equal, never yet took place in any nation; and never can, so long as the distinctions are acknowledged of rich and poor, master and servant, parent and child, old and young, strong and weak, active and indolent, wise and unwise. They will have a republic, and of this word, too, they misunderstand the meaning: they confound republic with levelling; and a levelling spirit, generally diffused, would soon overthrow the best republican fabric that ever was reared. They must also have a monarchy (or at least a monarch), without nobility; not knowing, that without a nobility a free monarchy can no more subsist than the roof of a house can rise to and retain its proper elevation while the walls are but half built; not knowing that where there are only-

two orders of people in a nation, and those the regal and the plebeian, there must be perpetual dissension between them, either till the King get the better of the people, or the people get the better of the King, which, where all subordination is abolished, must introduce anarchy. It must be the interest of the nobility to keep the people in good humour, these being always a most formidable body; and it is equally the interest of the nobles, to support the throne; for if it fall they are crushed in its ruins. The same House of Commons that murdered Charles I. voted the House of Lords to be useless; and when the rabble of France had imprisoned and enalaved their King, they immediately set about annihilating their nobles. Such things have happened, and such things must always happen in like circumstance. These principles I have been pondering in my mind these thirty years; and the more I learn of history, of law, and of human nature, the more I become satisfied of their truth. But there seems to be just now in France, such a total ignorance of human nature, and of good learning, as is perfectly astonishing; there is no consideration, no simplicity, no dignity; all is froth, phrenzy and Popery. In Mr. Burke's book are many expressions that might perhaps with equal propriety have been less warm, but against these it is not easy to guard, when a powerful eloquence is animated by an ardent mind. There are also, no doubt, some things that might have been omitted without loss; and the arrangement of the subject might perhaps have been more convenient for ordinary readers. But the spirit and principles of the work, I, as a lover of the King and of the Constitution of my country, do highly approve, and within my very narrow circle of influence I shall not fail to recommend it. It comes very seasonably, at a time when a considerable party among us are labouring to introduce into this island the anarchy of France, and when some seem to entertain the hope that the carnage of civil war will soon deluge our streets in blood; but no matter, say they, provided kings, and nobles, and bishops are exterminated, and Mohammedans, Pagans, and atheists obtain universal toleration. I once intended to have attempted to write something on the subject of Mr. Burke's book, and nearly according to his plan, and had my mind been a little more at ease during last summer, I believe I should have done it. But when I heard Mr. Burke had the matter in hand I knew any attempt of mine would be not only useless but impertinent. He has done the subject infinitely more justice than it was in my power to do."

Mr. Arbuthnot, writing of Burke's book to Beattie and of the very various opinions expressed concerning it, says :—

"February 18th, 1791.

"I own I admire it exceedingly. . . . I cannot avoid giving you an extract of a letter which my son John received the other day

from an officer of the Artillery, who lives mostly with Mr. Burke, to whom he is nearly related: 'It is the custom for the Opposition to go once a year to Court. The Duke of Portland and Mr. Burke went on Wednesday. His Majesty, in conversing with the latter, said, "You have been much employed of late," on which Mr. Burke bowed, but said nothing. Says the King, "There are none so deaf as those who won't hear, nor so dumb as those who won't speak." "I should be criminal," replied Mr. Burke, "if I any longer affected not to know the civilities your Majesty means; I should have acknowledged them at first, had I let my vanity govern me." "If," says his Majesty, "Mr. Burke can be vain, he has much reason; you have given the world a book which every honest man thanks you for. I thank you too, and, I am told, so says everybody, don't they, Lord Stairs!" turning round (which is his custom) to the person next him. He added, "Every gentleman owes you gratitude." I have not done justice to the latter part of the conversation. On Thursday, he went to the Drawing Room, where the Queen was very gracious, for the first time since the Regency; and, on Friday, the Archbishop of Canterbury waited on him to thank him in his own and in his professional character, for the well-timed support the Church and Constitution had received from him. "Such a work was wanting," said the Archbishop; "we felt it without being able to trace the various points it should embrace. It was reserved for you to do it,"' Yet (adds Mr. Arbuthnot), the sceptics and the Republicans are often open-mouthed against this excellent performance, but he has a very great and respectable majority for him."

The two following extracts from Mrs. Montagu's letter of 1790 refer to Sir Joshua Reynolds:—

"April 20th, 1790.

"I dined yesterday at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and had the pleasure of finding him in good health and spirits. The low cabal against him, formed by some envious members of the Academy, has happily ended in procuring him stronger testimony of the respect of the world, from the general concern expressed on his resigning the place of President, and the zeal with which the Academy solicited his return. Within these few days he received a snuff-box from the Czarina, with her medallion on the lid richly encircled with diamonds, and what pleased Sir Joshua still more, a letter under her Imperial Majesty's own hand (expressing the pleasure she had received from his Discourses) enclosed. As he is a great master of the pen as well as of the pencil, he has returned his acknowledgments to the Empress in a very elegant and polite style."

"August 9th, 1790.

"I find you had not heard of Sir Joshua Reynolds's loss of one eye, but I can with great pleasure assure you he is in good health and

good spirits, but unable to exert his great talents in his art. I hope he will employ his pen in giving precepts to the artists, though he can no longer give them patterns for imitation."

In the same year there is a letter of thanks from Mr. Alison, for the character Beattie had given of him to the Bishop of Worcester, from whom he hoped to obtain some preferment. The attention of the Bishop had been drawn to Mr. Alison, by his lately published "Essay on Taste"; and he had begged Lord Hailes to ask Beattie to let him know "whether Mr. Alison's moral and religious character be as respectable as his literary." To this year also belongs this letter from Lord Buchan:—

"I have heard with great concern of your son's indisposition and shall be anxious to know how he does, as I take a very sincere interest in what must touch so nearly a person for whom I have always had the greatest esteem, as well upon his own account as on account of the good I think he has sincerely endeavoured to render to society by his writings and careful instruction of the young men committed to his charge. I have destined one of the rooms in this house to exhibit on its walls the portraits of my countrymen whose lives and studies have been congenial to my taste, or whose writings have furnished me with instruction and useful amusement; among whom I desire to place yours. I beg you will cause Robertson at Aberdeen, or some other limner, to tint with oil colour varnish in colours the mezzo-tinto of your portrait by Reynolds from the original, the print being first of all put upon canvas on a straining frame. No doubt you have often seen mezzo-tintos finished from pictures in this manner in coloured varnish, which gives a very exact resemblance of the original picture. It will add to the pleasure I shall receive in this communication if you will inscribe it on the back with an address in your own writing and with your signature, that it may remain in my family as a memorial of our mutual regard."

Lord Gardenston, Beattie's first patron, sends him a copy of his "Travelling Memorandums," through J. Ewan, a silversmith in Aberdeen, the author of the song "The boatie rows," to whom he had written: "In my opinion there is no man in Scotland so good a judge of the English language as Dr. Beattie. I should be happy to have his free remarks and criticism."

1792.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WILBERFORCE AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

Mr. Dickson comes to Aberdeen to organize meetings against the Slave Trade—Introduced to Beattie by Wilberforce, and receives the Degree of LL.D. from Marischal College—A gentleman in the Midland Counties of England applies to Beattie on the death of his daughter—Beattie goes to Edinburgh to put the manuscripts of the Second Volume of his "Elements of Moral Science" into the hands of the printer—Is prevented by illness from going to Sandleford—Goes to Peterhead—Continued anxiety about his wife—Miss Valentine's father dies—Beattie invites his widowed sister to Peterhead—Mr. George Thomson asks Beattie to assist him in his Collection of Scotch Songs and Airs—Dr. Laing's pamphlet on the Mineral Waters of Peterhead and James Hay Beattie's Ode—Letter from the Duchess of Gordon—Monsieur Chevallier's Researches in the Plain of Troy—Remarks in Correspondence on the French Revolution—Weather during the year.

MR. WILBERFORCE's motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade had been badly beaten in the last session of Parliament, and he felt that an appeal to the justice and humanity of the nation must be made before he again brought up the subject. This appeal he proposed to make by means of county meetings all over the country. To organize such meetings in Scotland, Mr. Dickson, an enthusiastic worker in the crusade against the trade, came North, and wrote to Beattie from Perth that he had a letter of introduction to him from Mr. Wilberforce, which he would deliver when he reached Aberdeen; but meantime begged that he would arrange for a meeting of "some of our firmest and most confidential friends," to be held immediately on his arrival, as his time was very limited.

There is no account of any public meeting on the subject being held in Aberdeen at this time, though the *Aberdeen Journal* mentions that meetings were to be held at Perth, Huntly, and Banff; but Mr. Dickson must have met with a cordial reception from the College authorities, as it is announced in the *Journal* of March 5th, that "last week the University of Marischal College conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws on William Dickson, Esquire, author of 'Letters on Slavery,' and formerly private secretary to the late Honourable Edward Hay, Governor of the Barbadoes."

Later in the year (1792), when sending a parcel of publications on slavery for distribution, Mr. Dickson speaks of the unmerited distinction the University had been pleased to confer on him, and says that "should leisure and opportunity occur in a life hitherto much

diversified, I will endeavour to render myself as little unworthy as I can of being a member of your respectable body."

Of the effect of Beattie's writings and the place they had won for him in the hearts of many of his countrymen, a striking example is given by a few letters addressed to him during this spring.

A baronet, presumably a Scotsman from his name,¹ but writing from the midland counties of England, had, seven months before he wrote, lost his favourite child, a beautiful and accomplished young woman, and had in consequence been plunged into such deep grief that his family and, indeed, he himself, feared his reason would become affected.

These circumstances he relates to Beattie in his first letter, which he begins by giving his reason for addressing him:—

"You will, no doubt, be surprised to receive a letter from a person whose name even you probably never heard mentioned. But the trouble I presume to give you is brought on by yourself from the excellence of your invaluable performances." And he follows up his recital by saying: "It has occurred to me lately that you might be of service to me by commending a pious, sensible, attentive clergyman to live with me. If you know of any such it will be an act of great goodness to assist me, and I trust would not turn out any disadvantage to him."

We can only gather the nature of Beattie's replies from the further letters of his correspondent and his son—the latter, a young officer who seems to have been distinguished as a soldier and who certainly was a devoted son. Beattie had written as one suffering from a similar affliction, and thus fully able to sympathize in the father's feelings; and, after reminding him of the source from which alone they both could draw comfort, he had evidently endeavoured to arouse him from the selfish indulgence of grief by representing to him the duty of resignation to the Divine will, and what he owed to the large family who, as he had written, were still spared to him. He had also counselled the remedy of change of scene, which in his own case he had found beneficial; and it had been proposed that the father and son should go North to visit Beattie. Circumstances prevented this proposal from being carried out at the time, and it is doubtful whether a meeting ever took place, but the subsequent correspondence shows how much the father had benefited by it, and how deeply the family had appreciated the counsel and comfort it had afforded him. The father wrote: "Your letters have been of great service to me." And the son, when relating the great improvement in his father's spirits in consequence of his following the advices Beattie had given him, says: "Every member of the

¹ The name is withheld, as the circumstances are of a private family nature.

family must join with me in offering you our hearty thanks and in respecting and esteeming you even more (if that is possible) than the rest of our countrymen who have not the advantage of a more intimate acquaintance with you."

On the conclusion of the College session, Beattie and his son went to Edinburgh. During the winter, he had finished the second volume of his "Elements of Moral Science," which he now placed in the printer's hands.

Though much pressed by Mrs. Montagu to continue his journey to Sandeford (where she had a watch and "a nag" waiting her godson), he fortunately did not attempt the journey, as when about to leave Edinburgh he was detained by a severe attack of illness, and again on his journey home he was for five days laid up in an inn. He got to Aberdeen in a very weak state, and as soon as he was able went to Peterhead, where he hoped "to find fresh air and tranquillity, which are not to be got here."

The want of fresh air which Beattie complains of in Aberdeen gives a hint of the want of attention to drains and other means of sanitation prevalent in towns in those days.

The want of tranquillity was caused by new, impracticable and injudicious plans for Mrs. Beattie being constantly suggested to her husband at this time by friends living in Aberdeen. Unfortunately for Beattie, Sir William Forbes was abroad with his wife on account of her health; and Mr. Arbuthnot, who took the oversight of Mrs. Beattie in his absence, had not the same influence with her injudicious friends as Sir William had. Everything suggested that tended to make her condition more comfortable Beattie readily and gladly assented to, but he steadily refused to give his sanction to plans that would have done her harm. For the greater part of the summer he had constant anxiety on this subject.

From June till the end of October, he remained at Peterhead; but he failed to derive the benefit to his health that in former years had been the result of his sojourn there. During the greater part of the summer, east winds and tempestuous weather had prevailed, which had aggravated his complaints. He had been unable to bathe or to drink the waters, or to appear in company. "My time is employed chiefly in walking, or rather in attempting to walk, and in arranging and transcribing my son's papers. . . . Horseback is entirely beyond my reach, my vertigo being so violent, that I cannot without apprehension of falling go downstairs."

During the autumn, Miss Valentine, who was with her uncle at Peterhead, was summoned to Montrose to be with her father, who had been long an invalid, but was more seriously ill than usual. On reaching her home, she found that the end had come very suddenly, and that her father was already dead. As soon as the last duties had been paid to him, Beattie wrote to his niece begging

her to urge her mother to pass some weeks with him at Peterhead, as he was sure her health must have suffered from her long attendance on her husband.

This invitation, it is to be gathered from the correspondence, though it is not positively asserted, was accepted both by Mrs. Valentine and by her remaining son David, and it must have been a comfort to Beattie and his sister, strongly attached to each other as they had been all their lives, to be together for a little time in these sorrowful days of their declining years.

Towards the end of September, Mr. Arbuthnot wrote enclosing a letter to Beattie from Mr. George Thomson, who was then engaged in making his collection of Scotch airs, and finding for them appropriate words where the original ballads were silly or exceptionable. For this work he was most anxious to have Beattie's approval, as well as his assistance in carrying it out; and he applied to Mr. Arbuthnot to introduce him to Beattie's notice, and forward his letter to him.

Mr. Arbuthnot was unwilling in Beattie's weak state of health to comply with Mr. Thomson's request; but at last yielded to his importunity, as "his anxiety to have his work recommended by you" was so great. In doing so, he explains his connexion with Mr. Thomson, and why he considered him deserving of encouragement and assistance. Ten years ago, he had appointed him principal clerk in the Trustees Office,¹ the duties of which position he had always discharged with great fidelity, as well as considerable ability, and had never allowed his enthusiasm for music, and his great skill both as a vocal and an instrumental performer, to interfere with the duties of his profession, "which is too apt to be the case on such occasions." Though still a young man, Thomson had a wife and five or six children, who, he hoped, might derive some pecuniary benefit from his publication. These circumstances led Mr. Arbuthnot to beg Beattie to comply with Mr. Thomson's request, "if your health will admit of it."

Of this first letter of Thomson's enclosed by Mr. Arbuthnot, only the last page, containing a few concluding sentences, is preserved, and in it there is the request: "If you happen to have any manuscript songs suitable to some of our melodies,² I trust you will be so obliging as to communicate them"; but in Thomson's third and last

¹ Board of Trustees for Fisheries Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland, of which Mr. Arbuthnot was secretary.

² The only song by Beattie found in Thomson's Collection of Scottish Airs and Songs is, "Could aught of song declare my pain." It is in a volume dated 1808; also in the second edition, 1831. Beattie is also said to have supplied the sixth verse of "There's nae luck about the hoose" ("And will we see his face again"). "Could aught of song" is also given in Johnson's "Scots' Musical Museum," as written for the work by Burns (No. 493 of the songs). No. 106 of this collection, "On a rock by seas surrounded," is given as contributed by Dr.

letter, what he and Burns¹ particularly wished from Beattie is clearly stated.

"I read your opinions of the songs with pleasure, as I do everything that comes from your pen; but instead of proceeding further with those, as you speak of doing, when you have leisure I earnestly wish it were agreeable to you to devote the same time in extending a little and adapting for our purpose the observations on Scottish pastoral music, contained in section third of your 'Essay on Music and Poetry.' In writing to Mr. Burns, I mentioned my having some expectation of your doing this. I told him at the same time how much I regretted having lost, by the death of Mr. Tytler, an opportunity of procuring many curious anecdotes which he knew with respect to the Poetry of your Songs. The following was Mr. Burns's answer: 'I approve greatly of your plans. Dr. Beattie's Essay will of itself be a treasure. On my part I mean to draw up an appendix to the Doctor's Essay containing my stock of anecdotes, etc., of our Scotch songs. All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him, from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland I made a pilgrimage to the spot from which every song took its rise, "Lochaber" and the "Braes of Ballenden" excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots Muse.'"

Beattie, though he took a great interest in the work, was never able to adapt his Essay so as to form an introduction to it, and death prevented Burns from giving his stock of anecdotes, as we learn from Mr. Thomson's preface to his book of songs.

At this time, Dr. Laing was writing an account of Peterhead and its mineral waters in pamphlet form, and had asked Beattie's permission to append to it the English version of James Hay Beattie's Ode entitled "Invitation to Peterhead."

Mr. Arbuthnot took a great interest in this work of Dr. Laing's, hoping it would bring his native town into still greater repute as a watering place, and it was at his suggestion that the pamphlet was dedicated to the members of the "Merchant Maidens' Hospital," who were the Superiors of the town of Peterhead. He was much pleased when Beattie gave permission that his son's Ode should appear in the publication. He had a very high opinion of James Hay's genius and learning, and, on writing to his father about this Ode in terms of great praise, he adds: "There is one circumstance in regard to your son that has often appeared to me remarkable, which

Beattie. Neither Henley nor Wallace in their recent editions of Burns include "Conkl aught of song" among Burns's songs.

¹ Burns contributed upwards of one hundred songs for this publication.

is that even in his most juvenile pieces one can discover neither want of experience, nor ignorance of the world nor of mankind ; and that along with an uncommon degree of fancy he possessed a wonderful depth of knowledge and learning. I really do not recollect whether you have taken sufficient notice of this particular circumstance in the biographical account of your son—I say sufficient, because I think great attention ought to be paid to it, as in the course of my experience I have not met with an example so extraordinary as that which I allude to.”¹

Some time during this autumn, the Duchess of Gordon writes :—

“GORDON CASTLE,
“*Saturday.*”

“Where are you, and how are you, my good friend ! I came to this country with the pleasing hopes of seeing you here, where your society for many years made the joy of my life. There has been a death-like silence betwixt us ; for my part I have been very ill—a nervous affection in my head that makes writing very painful. Are you never to come to England ! How happy you would be to see these young friends you loved and improved, so comfortably settled. You would see their children surpassing both generations in beauty, and their homes as much devoted to you and your son as ever their mother’s was. Colonel Lennox is once more ordered abroad—thank Heaven, only to Gibraltar. I have spent most of my time in Glenfiddoch. The ‘Lonely Cot’ has still ten thousand charms for me. I never was so delighted with its wild beauty as after being so long in the tame plain of ——² where I spent the winter.

“The Duke of Manchester is everything I could wish. Do come and see us ; it will do you good and will make us all happy. I should have gone by Aberdeen, had you been there, but I hear you are at Peterhead. How I should like to spend some days with you, and have one more walk upon the solitary shore, where we used to be so gay and happy. I go to-morrow ; the Duke goes but to return. I am going to build a Shieling in Badenoch ; perhaps you and Montagu may come next summer and view those tremendous mountains covered with fragrant birch and gloomy pine. I hope your son has not forgotten us.”

With a trembling hand, Beattie has marked this letter as answered. He was not able to do more.

¹ During this autumn, Mr. Arbuthnot made arrangements for the printing of Beattie’s Memoir of his son and some of his writings, the expense to be wholly defrayed by Beattie, but, owing to some change in the firm of the printers he had employed, the book was not printed until 1794.

² Name not decipherable.

Writing in May to Mrs. Montagu, Beattie gives an account of Monsieur Chevalier and his researches in the Plain of Troy.

"A thin quarto has been published at Edinburgh with this title : 'A Description of the Plain of Troy, with a Map of that Region, delineated from an Actual Survey.' I have read it with great satisfaction. It throws light on many passages of Homer, and incontestably proves the great poet's wonderful accuracy in describing rivers, countries, and other natural objects. It was written originally in French by Mons. Chevalier, a gentleman of a most amiable character, who resided long in Edinburgh, and who read this work, in three discourses, before our Royal Society. He seems to have proceeded in his researches with equal caution and perseverance, for he visited the Plain of Troy three several times. The Simois, the Scamander, the hot and cold springs of the latter, have all been found, together with the tombs of many heroes, one of the most distinguished of which the author proves with high plausibility to have been that of Hector. These tombs bear an exact resemblance to those artificial mounds, or barrows, which are so frequent in Wiltshire, particularly in the neighbourhood of Marlborough. Mons. Chevalier had nothing of the frenzy of his countrymen ; he never mentioned the calamities of France without tears. He was well known to our friends, Sir William Forbes and Mr. Arbuthnot, who gave me a particular account of him. He has now left this country and gone to England."

In the same letter, Beattie writes : "I lately met, by accident, with a gentleman from France, who not only confirms what we have heard of the anarchy of that miserable country, but says further that means have been found to conceal from the rest of Europe many of the most outrageous enormities. This is what Mr. Burke has often insinuated in the House of Commons. Happy would it be for Britain if she would, as the old ballad says, 'from others' harms learn to be wise' ; but I am sorry to see a spirit of turbulence rising among us, which seems to be encouraged and to gain ground in the same proportion in which in other countries it is found to be productive of devastation."

On this subject, Arbuthnot writes in August :—

"I think the French are now going altogether to the Devil ! yet, would you believe it, there were in this metropolis on the 14th of July five or six different companies employed in solemnising that most inauspicious Revolution ! There are some follies which I can understand, and which perhaps admit of an apology, but I can find no excuse for that in question ; I doubt a disposition to mischief is at the bottom of it. Were you not sorry when you heard that your worthy and venerable friend, Dr. Reid, was so weak as to remit money to the National Assembly ?" And again, on the 29th of August, he writes : "France presents a very awful spectacle, as well

as an instructive lesson to other nations, of which I hope they will take advantage ; and yet there are actually people here from whom better things might be expected, who still persist in justifying the conduct of France, and who you would imagine are more interested in the prosperity of that worthless and unprincipled nation than of their own country. I have again perused with great pleasure that part of your manuscript¹ with regard to Government, which I think excellent, and in my opinion you have there proved that the experience of mankind has not yet exhibited a political institution which unites public order with individual personal security in a greater degree than our own. I submit to you whether it might not be proper, when you come to revise the proof sheets on that subject, to take notice of some operations connected with the French Revolution that have lately happened."

On this subject, Mrs. Montagu writes on the 2nd of October : "The proceedings of the French democrats are too terrible to be related in a letter. The Archbishop of Aix, who escaped from Paris with great difficulty a few days ago, is now with Lord and Lady Porchester in this neighbourhood, and they brought him to visit me yesterday. He is a man of most polite and amiable manners as well as distinguished talents and virtues. I am informed by him and others who have lately escaped from Paris that the murders lately committed there have not been done in the tumultuous manner in which a mob proceeds, but with a severe, calm and inflexible cruelty, amid a crowd of spectators, none of whom showed any pity or horror at the tortures the assassins inflicted on the innocent victims. This is an improvement on ferocity."

Beattie replied : "I am very glad to hear that the Archbishop of Aix has made his escape from the savages of France. I am far from intending a censure on the whole nation. In France are many persons highly respectable for abilities and virtues. But the faction that now tyrannises there deserves a much more opprobrious epithet than savage, and if they continue to go on as they have gone for some time past, must become the abhorrence of every considerate mind. Was it ever before heard that in any Legislative Assembly, even of barbarians, a motion should be seriously made, and by many supported, of embodying twelve hundred assassins, with a commission to scatter themselves through Europe in order to cut off by poison, and other sorts of cowardly murder, all those persons, of whatever condition, who should seem unfriendly to their cause? Yet, if we believe the Newspapers, this was proposed in (what they call) the 'National Assembly' without exciting any horror, or even blame, and rejected not because it was in itself bad or shameful but because it seemed not politic ; as it might irritate other nations to adopt the same measure with respect to those who just

Manuscript of second volume of "Elements of Moral Science."

now bear the sway in France. But from this last consideration little harm was to be apprehended, as I suppose those same French tyrants are the only people in human shape who would not abhor such diabolical policy."

Of the weather that prevailed during the year, and of the state of the roads on the east coast of Scotland in those days, Beattie gives Mrs. Montagu a dismal account: "I cannot think of Sandleford without contrasting it with the sights I now see, and the sounds I now hear: continual tempests of wind and rain, a harvest half destroyed, and many poor shivering beings who can ill bear the 'pelting of these pitiless storms,' and have before them the dreary prospect of a long winter, with very little provision of either fuel or food. There has not been so much unseasonable weather in this country since 1782, which was a year of dearth and almost of famine. I must in a few days return to Aberdeen, as the College is about to commence; but our roads are so bad (for they are never mended), and so much broken by the rain, that if I could find an opportunity I would return by sea. The distance is only ten leagues."

1793.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BEATTIE'S DECLINING HEALTH—GLENNIE MADE ASSISTANT.

The last session in which Beattie taught without an Assistant—Second Volume of "Elements of Moral Science" published—Letter of events occurring in France—Mr. Wilson, James Hay Beattie's friend, lost at sea—Unfortunate visit to Montrose—Moves into another house to make room for Mrs. Beattie, who again comes to live with her father—Goes to Peterhead in June—Takes Montagu to Edinburgh with him in August—Meets the Duchess of Gordon there—Pays a visit to Cluny Castle—sudden death of his sister, Mrs. Valentine—Engages Mr. George Glennie as his Assistant—Mr. Fraser Tytler asks him to write a memoir of his father—Agrees to do so, but is prevented by bad health—Afterwards done by Mr. Henry Mackenzie—Letters from friends to whom he had sent copies of his "Elements of Moral Science"—State of business in the country—Meal Riots in Peterhead and French Ships off the coast.

THE College session of 1792-1793 was the last in which Beattie was able to undertake the duties of his class without an assistant; and, from the wretched state of his health, it must have been with great difficulty that he did so. Any literary work, beyond correcting the proofs of the second volume of his "Elements of Moral Science," which by the printer's delay was not published till March of this year, he does not seem to have attempted.

The events occurring in France, and the effect they were having, or were likely to have, on Britain, occupied men's minds greatly at this time. On this subject, Beattie wrote to Mrs. Montagu on the 10th of January: "My mind has been agitated not a little by the very uncommon events of a public nature which have succeeded one another with so extraordinary rapidity during the last five months. The unanimity of Parliament, and my confidence in their wisdom, have given some respite to my anxiety; but in the present fever of the time there are still among us many alarming symptoms. What a spectacle does France exhibit now! Of barbarous nations becoming gradually civilised, there have been innumerable examples, but a civilised nation becoming in a moment barbarous is such a phenomenon as I think never appeared in the world before. . . . In this town and neighbourhood, and in all or most of the provinces to the northward of it, the generality of the people seem inclined to be quiet; though I know that among the half-thinkers and the paradoxical, and those who never before thought of any other politics than the news or lies of the day, there are wrongheads in abundance. But I do not think them at all formidable. Innumerable associations

have been formed, or are forming, among us in behalf of the Constitution ; and those have been joined by many persons who, in the beginning of the French business, were very partial to it. Government acted wisely in taking the alarm so early, and in considering the danger as rather greater than it really was. In fact all the friends of Government did so. But the unanimity of Parliament has wonderfully changed the face of affairs.

"Of all our Scotch towns, Dundee seems to have been the most inclined to turbulence. A gentleman who was there lately told me that to him it seemed to be almost ripe for insurrection. The very boys were taught to bawl out on the street 'Liberty and Equality.' A thing called a tree of liberty was actually set up ; but in this they have not, so far as I know, been followed by any other town in Scotland. Dundee is said to contain about sixteen thousand inhabitants, most of whom are more illiterate than the people of Scotland commonly are. I remember the first time I was in it. About thirty years ago I went into a bookseller's shop, and, expressing my surprise at finding it merely a circulating library of novels, the man of the shop told me that nothing else was read in Dundee. But now it seems they have got a new light, for I have it on good authority that one shop sold no fewer than a thousand copies of Paine's silly books. Is it to be wondered at that poor ignorant people, who on the subject of Government had never perhaps before employed five minutes' thought, should be misled by the falsehoods and vague theories of that performance ?—which, by the bye, has been circulated with amazing industry in this country, but seems now to be passing rapidly to oblivion."

Mrs. Montagu, whose letters were not now so frequent owing to the weakness of her eyes, replies : "We¹ passed our summer and autumn at Sandleford very delightfully ; though I do not think the pleasures of a London life as elegant and sublime as those the country affords. We should have been comfortable here if the alarms we have been in on account of the mischiefs intended to have been brought on by a vile English faction in desperate conspiracy with many French democrats had not thrown a gloomy terror over everyone. If our minister had delayed his preventive measures forty-eight hours, a plan for seizing the Tower, plundering the Bank, setting London on fire, had been put in execution ; and to give more effect to the project of burning the town, the sources from whence the fire engines were supplied were to have been cut off. I thank God we are now in a state of greater security and tranquillity ; but there remains so much of terrible recollection of what might have been effected, and may at some future time be attempted by domestic and foreign in conjunction, that the wonted cheerfulness is no longer to be found in society."

¹ Her nephew, his wife, and five children had been living with her.

Beattie was much distressed in the early part of this year to hear that Mr. Wilson, who had so faithfully attended on James Hay during his last illness, had been lost at sea. He had a great affection for the young man, whose education he had superintended, and who for so many years had been his son's companion. After James Hay's death, he had made what is characterized as "a generous offer" of provision for Mr. Wilson's future; but finding he was averse to his proposition, and preferred to go to sea, he had used his influence to procure for him the position as Surgeon's mate, which, however, he did not live to receive. All that was left for Beattie further to show his affection and gratitude was to comfort and assist the young man's widowed mother, which he now exerted himself to do.

It had been his intention to go to Edinburgh at the close of the session; but an excursion he took in April to visit his relatives at Laurencekirk and Montrose fatigued him so greatly that he was obliged to give up thoughts of going farther south till he had gained more strength. His visit to Montrose at this time was most unfortunate. The town being full of soldiers and recruits, he got bad lodgings, where he caught cold; and one of the chaise horses had viciously bitten his shoulder, causing considerable loss of blood, but with no serious result, and the wound quickly healed.

On his return to Aberdeen, he would have gone at once to Peterhead; but, before he could do so, he had to move into another house. For some years past he had been living under the same roof as his father-in-law, Dr. Dun, though they seem to have kept separate establishments. But now what he had for some time dreaded, though he was kept in ignorance of it till the last moment, was to be carried out. Mrs. Beattie was again to be brought to live with her father, and he had hurriedly to take any house available and move into it to leave room for her.¹ He moved from the Schoolhill to the Upper Kirkgate in June, and then went to Peterhead, where he remained till the middle of August.

Dr. Laing's account of Peterhead and its mineral waters, which had just been published, seems to have drawn many visitors thither this season; but Beattie, though improved in health, again does not seem to have derived the same benefit as usual from his stay there. However, towards the middle of September, he was able to carry out his intended visit to Edinburgh accompanied by Montagu.

There he had the pleasure of meeting the Duchess of Gordon, who was living with Lady Maxwell at Shrub Hill, half-way between Edinburgh and Leith. She was far from well, suffering from nervous ailments, but very cheerful, occupying herself, among other things, with exerting her influence in the interests of those whom she

¹ The manner in which this plan was brought about must have been very vexing, besides being very disrespectful, to Beattie.

considered worthy of promotion, as it was always her pleasure to do. At this time, she secured the promise of Lord Chatham that Beattie's nephew David Valentine should be made a lieutenant in the Navy, as she had formed a very favourable opinion of him from his manly appearance and behaviour. The only other incident of Beattie's stay in Edinburgh is mentioned in a letter to Mrs. Montagu as likely to give her pleasure, showing as it did the good feeling of the nation to the Constitution and the present administration. "Archibald, Earl of Kelly, a benevolent and pious nobleman, proposed some time ago that a sum of money should be raised by subscription for supplying our army in Flanders with *flannel waistcoats* to defend them from the rigours of a winter's campaign. This was about five weeks ago. I was then in Edinburgh, and some of my friends insisted that I should write the advertisement or handbill to be circulated on the occasion. I would have excused myself, but they would not hear of my excuse, though I was then, as I am now, unfit for every sort of business. I therefore wrote the advertisement, of which you will find a printed copy enclosed, and have the pleasure to add that upwards of five hundred pounds is subscribed already, and that the thing goes on as well as could be expected, considering the extent of poverty in the country."

Mrs. Montagu wrote in reply: "I am very glad the cause of our army got so good an advocate as Dr. Beattie. I propose to get three hundred waistcoats made for them by the poor women in this neighbourhood, so that the whole cost of my gift will be useful."

A few days Beattie spent with Mr. Gordon at Cluny after his return from Edinburgh was a pleasure to both. Mr. Gordon, writing shortly after, says:—

"I thought myself singularly obliged to you for your kind visit last October; but if God should spare us both till next season you must come to me a little earlier and stay longer. One infirmity among a great many others that increasing age brings on me is a growing impatience of nonsense, ignorance, dulness, and absurdity; impressed by that weakness, I frequently suffer much in the country and cannot complain. You must therefore be sensible how much I am cheered and comforted by your company and instructive conversation, and how much I am flattered by your enduring any shallow remark that may happen to come from me."

Beattie had not long returned from Cluny when another severe affliction came upon him. His sister, Mrs. Valentine, was taken ill in the streets of Montrose one forenoon, and on being taken home became insensible, and died two days after. Her daughter, after her hurried journey to Montrose, had not the satisfaction of being recognized by her, and her son was at Spithead, unable even to come to his mother's funeral. Neither was her favourite brother able to be there; he was obliged to content himself with sending

Montagu and his nephew, Professor James Beattie, in his stead. This fresh sorrow told heavily on Beattie, and increased his weakness and other ailments.

And now the commencement of the College session was close at hand, and he found he was likely to have a large number of students in the class, to whom he felt he would be very unable to do justice. This obliged him to look for an assistant; and, after being disappointed in one who failed him from ill-health, he engaged his son James Hay's old friend, Mr. George Glennie, to act in that capacity. Mr. Glennie was the youngest son of Dr. John Glennie, parish minister of Maryculter, who had been, along with Dr. Campbell, one of the members of the first Theological Club founded in Marischal College in 1742.

In the previous autumn, Mr. Arbuthnot, when writing to Beattie of the death of their common friend, Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee,¹ said: "The very last time I saw him he inquired particularly for you, and said to me, 'I wish you could persuade him to finish the "Minstrel."'"

Mr. Tytler had early become acquainted with Beattie, and Sir W. Forbes says, "loved and respected him as an able champion of truth, with whom he ever after continued to live on the footing of the most intimate friendship." His son, Mr. Fraser Tytler, afterwards Lord Woodhouselee, had asked Beattie to write a Memoir of his father, and, in the end of this year, sent him some notes and observations on his life and character which he had drawn up to help in the work, saying at the same time: "It is most kind in you to say that you will consider as an agreeable employment the paying of this tribute to the memory of a departed friend, and I will flatter myself that your health, of which I am heartily sorry you should speak so despondently, will not be an obstacle, nay, will be the better, for the exertion." His health did, however, prove an obstacle. Beattie was never able to write the Memoir of his friend.

An account of Mr. Tytler's life and writings was afterwards drawn up by Mr. Henry Mackenzie in a paper which was read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and subsequently published in their "Transactions."

Many of the letters addressed to Beattie during this year contain the writers' thanks for copies of his "Elements of Moral Science" which he had sent them. Among them are letters from Lord Kintore, Wilberforce, Sylvester Douglas, Mr. Fraser Tytler (whose letter is a short and appreciative review of the whole work); Lord Dartmouth, who, remarking on the passages on the Slave Trade, says that, "it gives me very great satisfaction to find that my sentiments

¹ Author of the "Poetical Remains of James I. of Scotland."

on that very important subject are corroborated and confirmed by your authority"; and others, among whom it is interesting to note the reappearance of a handwriting so constantly to be met with in former years, but now for a long time absent from the correspondence. The warm friendship that subsisted between Lord and Lady Newhaven and the Beatties had apparently ceased, as in none of his latter visits to London is there any allusion to them or any mention of visiting them. Whatever had been the cause of this cessation, it clearly cannot be traced to any coldness that had arisen between them, as the present letter shows.

Lady Newhaven dates from Kensington Palace, and, after thanking him for his valuable present, says it fortunately found her surrounded by a family whose good taste and desire to please her made them insist "upon gratifying themselves and supplying my very defective organs of sight by reading it to me." The family was that of Sir Henry and Lady Dashwood and their six children, who had been her guests and nurses for the last seven months. She had had a paralytic stroke, from the effects of which she did not feel entirely recovered, and she writes of many disagreeable events having befallen them of late years. She begs Beattie to let her know the present state of himself and his family, adding: "Your trials have been much severer than mine, but you have more strength of mind and body to combat with them. In one thing at least we both agree—in firmly believing that these temporary evils will prove infinite blessings in the end, and that it will depend upon ourselves to be happy at last."

In Beattie's reply, he enters fully and affectionately into all her circumstances, as well as into those of his own family, with all the old interest and friendship, but taking it for granted that she is ignorant of his son's death and of his own life for a good many years past. As he speaks of Lord Newhaven being employed in the great and good work of preserving the peace and promoting the prosperity of his country, it may be concluded that business detained him in Ireland.

In one of Mr. Arbuthnot's letters, dated in May, there are some remarks on the state of business in the country:—

"My time and attention have of late been so much engaged on account of the many disastrous events that have happened among the traders and manufacturers of this country that I really could think of nothing else. It has, indeed, been a most alarming period, but I am well persuaded the measure which has been taken by Government will be attended with the happiest effects; and the truth is that I believe it will be found upon investigation that the late failures, both in England and Scotland, at least many of them, did not arise from any want of the substantial materials of credit, but were the natural, and, indeed, the unavoidable, consequences of a

sudden check of circulation, proceeding from a temporary pressure of circumstances, so I hope matters will in a short time be in their former prosperous situation."

Dr. Laing writes of the Meal Riots of Peterhead: "The sober character of my fellow townsmen has been for some time suspended, but I would now fain hope it is not lost, though I lately feared the contrary. We have had sad mobbing and some acts of violence, as well as much threatening about meal. The exertions of the gentlemen in buying meal for the people, and causing it to be sold at a shilling per peck, whatever it may cost, have now brought things to quiet, but not without a sort of sacrifice to their vengeance. A country farmer called Crookie, a kind of forestaller and engrosser, they were determined to hang and burn in effigy; and this mock tragedy was last night performed by hundreds of actors amidst, I believe, thousands of spectators, not only of the townspeople, but from the country far and near. The burning of Crookie is nothing, but the beginning of a violent spirit in any place is a great deal. Yet this we found it more prudent to wink at, and put on the footing of a piece of fun, than to oppose it; which last plan would doubtless have begun most serious mischief, whereas by the other method the whole multitude dispersed without the least mischief, and all is quiet to-day. This alteration in the mild spirit of this town is one of the evil fruits of our manufactories; numbers of scoundrels are brought from all parts, knaves who hardly ever possessed a whole shilling at once before; they are introduced to high daily pay; they think themselves equal to any persons they can see; they are rude, insolent, and riotous.

"This day again the attention of all and the terrors of some have been excited by two warships, which, by sending a pilot boat on board, we have found to be both French; the one a seventy-four and the other a thirty-two or thirty-six gun ship. Their destination is supposed to be to lie off the Orkneys waiting for Indian ships coming home north about. This night we have a strong guard of trained men at the battery to prevent the landing of boats to pillage, and I hope this night also we dispatch intelligence to Government."

CHAPTER XXIX.

BEATTIE'S MEMOIR OF HIS SON.

Letter to Mrs. Montagu—Writes Latin Inscription for Dr. Blacklock's Tombstone—Dilly wishes to publish a handsome edition of the "Minstrel" and other Poems—Memoir of his son printed and distributed to friends this Spring—Advancement of Sylvester Douglas—Major Mercer—Sets out for Montrose, but taken ill at Stonehaven and has to return home—Later goes to Peterhead and remains there till the end of September—Invitations to Cluny Castle—Letter to Mrs. Montagu—State of Country—Letter from Pinkerton, then writing his "History of Scotland"—Beattie's "Evidences of Christianity" always among the books presented to a young man on leaving Christ Church Hospital for the University—Letters received from friends thanking him for copies of his Memoir of his son—Last letter from Lady Newhaven—Letters from an old pupil and the father of a pupil.

IN a letter to Mrs. Montagu of an early date in this year, Beattie mentions that he continued to teach his class daily for two hours, but had been obliged to leave the early morning hour entirely to his assistant. On passing events, he remarks that he had heard with much satisfaction of the success of the subscription "for flannel to our brave countrymen in Flanders," the advertisement of which he had been asked to write. "Fifteen hundred pounds are already subscribed in this country, and the example is likely to be followed in many parts of England. . . . Sedition is still busy in North Britain; we have lately had two more trials for it before our Supreme Court of Justiciary, and they have ended like the former two—the jury unanimous in finding the charge proved, and the Court unanimous in banishing the criminals for fourteen years. . . . A society in and about Edinburgh has had the impudence to make some appearance under the name of the 'British Convention,' and to adopt all the French gibberish of *civism* and *incivism*, *organisation*, *bulletin*, etc. I have seen in the newspapers a list of their names, the authenticity of which has not yet been called in question. There are but few of them, and they are all low people, weavers chiefly, I think. I have heard of only one man of rank among them who no doubt wishes to do mischief, but his abilities are not formidable, not more so than those of 'Citizen Stanhope.'"

In February, Beattie composed the Latin inscription which is engraved on the tombstone of his friend Dr. Blacklock, who had been dead for rather more than two years. He did this at Mrs. Blacklock's request and sent it to her through Sir W. Forbes, but was so unwell at the time that he begged him to show it to

Mr. Arbuthnot, Dr. Gregory, and Mr. Francis Tytler, as "I am just now in such a state that I should not wonder if gross blunders were found in it." There is a letter of grateful thanks from Mrs. Blacklock written after the stone had been erected.

Early in this year, Dilly wrote that it was now nearly twelve years since he had published an edition of the "Minstrel" and other poems, but during that time two or three spurious editions had appeared; he now wished to issue a very handsome edition to supplant all others, and he begged Beattie to send him a corrected copy that he might print from it.

About the month of April, the "Essays and Fragments by James Hay Beattie," to which is prefixed an account of the author's life and character, was issued from the press, and Beattie presented his friends with copies of the work. He was sensitive as to what might be thought of his motives for writing of his son, fearing they might be supposed to arise from "vanity, folly, or ostentation," but he felt so satisfied that he was only doing an act of justice to his memory that he writes to Sir William Forbes he did not intend to mind what was said by outsiders if his friends approved, adding: "On the north wall of Marischal College there is an inscription in very antique characters in these words: *They say—what say they—let them say.*"

In the same letter to Sir William Forbes (May 15th), he speaks of the advancement of their common friend, Sylvester Douglas, of which he had lately heard: "You would be glad to hear of Sylvester Douglas's good fortune. He has already settled a hundred a year upon his sister, and there is good reason to believe that his generosity will not stop there. I saw Major Mercer last night and congratulated him upon his brother-in-law's advancement to the dignity of Privy Councillor in England as well as in Ireland, and told him what he had not before heard, that the freedom of the City of Dublin was voted to Mr. Douglas in a silver box. When Douglas and I used to make puns together at Gordon's Mills we little thought of those things. I have the vanity to think that I was one of the first, if not the very first, who formed anything like an adequate idea of Douglas's abilities. I was then about twenty-five and he about three years younger. We were almost constantly together."

It was a great pleasure to Beattie and his old friend Major Mercer in their declining years that they were within easy reach of each other. Both had ceased to mix in general society, Beattie from the state of his own health, the Major on account of the health of his wife. She could not move without his assistance, and he never left her for any length of time. They made up for the want of variety of society by frequent meetings with each other. "One evening I call on the Major; next evening he calls on me," Beattie wrote to Sir William Forbes.

At the close of the College session, Beattie set out for Montrose, but got no further than Stonehaven, where he became so ill that he had to return home. Later in the year, he was able to go to Peterhead. Mr. Gordon reminded him three times of his intention of paying a long visit at Cluny that year and urged him to fulfil it, but from the state of his health it seems unlikely he was able to do so. Writing in the end of the year to Mrs. Montagu, he says: "Of my health, about which you so kindly inquire, I cannot give a good character. The inflammation in my eyes and rheumatism in my hands remain as they were. But the worst of all my complaints is a dizziness of head which has molested me more or less these thirty years, and is now become so violent that it often deprives me of the power of thinking, and dissipates my attention so much that I cannot even read. It also prevents my walking, which is the only exercise of which of late years I have been capable." In the same letter, he writes:—

"The dreary month of November, which, I suppose, is not less gloomy in London than in other places, is now almost gone, and will, I hope, be followed by days of better weather and better news. In this country our remoteness from the seat of authentic intelligence fills us with apprehension, from which I hope you are in a great measure free; and our miserable climate, which for many days has been worse than I remember to have seen it, adds a double gloom to the horrors of our political atmosphere. For these three weeks we have not seen the sun, being benighted in continual fog and drenched with incessant rain. Yet we enjoy many mercies and ought not to despond. Our harvest has been plentiful, and was safely got in long ago, and some late wholesome severities in the administration of public justice, co-operating with the very seasonable suspension of the Habeas Corpus, have both lowered the voices and lessened the number of our political grumblers, so that I hope we shall have *domestic* peace at least for the remaining part of the winter. Whatever the issue may be of the trials now going on at the Old Bailey, this one good effect they seem to have had already, that the nation must from them be satisfied that conspiracies against the Constitution were actually found and in considerable forwardness, and that those sagacious peers and commoners who were quite positive there was no such thing must either have had very bad information or been very dull of hearing and slow of heart to believe. Had the Legislature been swayed by the theories of these wiseacres we should have been before now involved in civil war; and though it is not to be supposed that Britons could ever become such miscreants as the French are, our condition must have been extremely perilous both at home and abroad."

In the correspondence of this year, there is a letter from Pinkerton thanking Beattie for sending him a copy of his "Elements of Moral

Science," and at the same time begging him at some leisure time to favour him with his thoughts on the best characteristics of historic style. Pinkerton was then engaged in writing his "History of Scotland from the Roman Times to the Death of James V., 1542," a work of infinite research and labour, to be comprised in two volumes. "It has occupied my chief attention for these eight years, and in two years more I hope to be ready to publish."

Mr. Chalmers, Aberdeen, sends Beattie the following extract from a letter he had just received from his brother, Mr. Alex. Chalmers, London: "Present my kindest regards to Dr. Beattie, and inform him of the following testimony to his merit. When a youth goes to the University from Christ's Hospital he is presented with books to the amount of five pounds. These are generally chosen by the headmaster, and Dr. Beattie's 'Evidences of Christianity' are *always* part of the list. The young man may choose any other he likes, but *that* is never excepted. Dr. Bowyer is headmaster."

The other letters of this year are chiefly letters of thanks for the gift of the Memoir of his son, and must have gratified Beattie by the appreciation of James Hay's character and talents, and their sympathy with himself and his grief. There are letters from the Bishops of London, Worcester, and Salisbury, Lord Orford, Mrs. Montagu, Lady Colville, Lord and Lady Cremorne, the Honourable Mrs. Boyd, Mrs. Wright, of Lawton, Dr. Heberden, Miss Hannah More, Lady Newhaven, and others.

Lady Newhaven's was her last. Since her former letter, she had experienced much sorrow; she had become a widow, and Lady Dashwood had lost two of her children with croup. They had, however, experienced much kindness in their sorrow. The Princess Elizabeth, who was a great friend of Lady Dashwood's, thinking change of air and scene would be beneficial for them all, had taken a pretty, small place called "Clay Hill," within two miles of Windsor, and insisted on their taking possession of it for some months, and this kindness had greatly revived Lady Dashwood's spirits. For their winter quarters, Lady Newhaven had taken a house in Windsor, near the Castle, that they might be not far from their royal friend; and, "added to this inducement, I had another equally strong, which is having opportunity of watching over the morals of the two eldest boys, who are to undergo the fiery trial of Eton's school, from whence I hope they will come out safe at last. The eldest is a very hopeful boy of twelve years old, and the second of only eight is going there also, at the desire of the King, to whom he has the honour of being page, and is a most sweet child."

And so we leave her reaping the reward of her careful upbringing of her adopted daughter, surrounded by whose family she found interests and a loving home in her old age. Of her own feelings she writes: "My spirits are too much run down by a series of afflictions

to expect much relief from anything but time and religious affections, though I still remain possessed of many blessings and comforts quite unmerited, though not unthanked for, by me."

Among other letters is one from an old student, a Mr. John Kemp, who, at the time he wrote, had been for ten years Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in Columbia College, New York, and who says: "Marischal College is powerful here. Our Professor of Greek and Latin, Mr. Wilson, and one of the most popular preachers of the Episcopal Church, a Mr. Bisset, are alumni of the same respectable Alma Mater." And one from the father of a pupil, who dates from Tynemouth Barracks,¹ thanking Beattie for his kindness in arranging his son's studies for him, and regretting that he had not had an opportunity of saying how much he had been gratified, when calling on Beattie with his boy, "in finding myself in the presence of one whom I have long and respectfully admired at a distance. I consider it as the accomplishment of an early vow which veneration for the author of the 'Essay on Truth' and the friend of my excellent master, Dr. Gregory, had won from me at a period of life when I was not much older than the boy I brought with me to Aberdeen."

¹ He signs "John Marshall"; and, as he speaks of Dr. Gregory as his master, he was presumably a doctor in the Army.

CHAPTER XXX.

BEATTIE AND PRESBYTERIAN UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

Mr. Fraser Tytler, on account of Beattie's failing health, releases him from his promise of writing a Memoir of his father, Mr. William Tytler—Mrs. Arbuthnot's death—Beattie unable to go as far as Peterhead till August—Mention of Dr. Brown, Principal Campbell's Successor—Military Training in Peterhead—Montagu Beattie's love of Drawing and Painting—Letters from Mrs. Montagu—Mr. Crawford asking information as to the Charter Statute, etc., of Marischal College, to assist in drawing up the Constitution of the proposed Presbyterian University to be established in the North of Ireland—Lord Mansfield and Sir C. Middleton.

THE records of this year are very scanty. Beattie's health was rapidly failing, and his various ailments were more severe and more disabling than hitherto.

The first letter preserved was from Mr. Fraser Tytler, who feels, on hearing how ill Beattie is, that the promise he had made of writing a Memoir of his father must be a burden to him, and he cannot be easy until he has discharged him from any obligation that he may think himself under to undertake the work. He goes on to say that he has taken notice of James Hay's Latin compositions in a new edition of his "Essay on Translation," which he was just preparing for the press. Of this notice he sends a copy, and begs that if it does not meet with Beattie's entire approval he will let him know how he would wish it altered, and it should be done.

Beattie's hands and arms were so crippled with rheumatism during this summer that Montagu had to act as his amanuensis, and through him his correspondence with Mrs. Montagu was kept up. In her early letters of this year, she is concerned, not only about Beattie's health, but also about the illness and subsequent death of the good old Mrs. Arbuthnot, to whom she had been so kind. This event took place in May; and, when Beattie visited Peterhead, he found his old friend's house "completely gutted of everything except her cat, which cannot be prevailed on to leave the premises."

But it was late in the season before Beattie was able to attempt a journey to Peterhead. Not till the 12th of August did he set out, evidently scarcely expecting to be able to reach his destination, as Major Mercer writes to him a few days after: "I felt a sort of triumph when I understood that you had not turned back on the road to Ellon;¹ and although the journey after so long a confinement

¹ One of the first stages on the way to Peterhead.

must have been a painful exertion for you, I am in great hopes that it will in the end be productive of the best consequences." In the same letter, the Major mentions having met Dr. Brown, Principal Campbell's successor, as minister of the West Church, Aberdeen, and ultimately also as Principal of Marischal College.

"It was my good fortune some days ago to dine with Dr. Brown, successor to Dr. Campbell. He is a lively, well-bred, entertaining man, and his wife is an agreeable and beautiful woman, but my attention was chiefly directed to his mother-in-law, by whose side I happened to be seated. She is a charming old woman, and affords a sample of foreign manners of the very best style. She is a native of Switzerland, and does not speak a word of English. I was, therefore, obliged to rub up my old French; she seemed to take in good part my bungling endeavours to please, and I assure you that I was highly pleased with her."

The only letters of Beattie's of this year are two, in answer to Major Mercer—the first evidently written with great difficulty, the second with a much steadier hand, showing that the three weeks he had by this time passed in Peterhead had done him good. In the end of his last letter, he remarks: "Military operations go on here with great pomp and no little noise, but if I mistake not are conducted on a plan of discipline somewhat different from what you formerly learned in Germany."

During this autumn, Montagu was very busy with his pencil, taking many sketches of Peterhead and objects of interest in its neighbourhood. We do not hear of his having any instruction in drawing or painting, but he was evidently very fond of both. He has left two little miniatures, painted on ivory, of his grandfather and Miss Valentine, and a good many sketches, some slightly coloured, of places both in England and in Scotland. In the course of this summer, he had sent a specimen of his skill to his godmother, who writes: "I am much pleased with the account you give me of my dear godson's pursuits and occupations, and shall be very thankful for the landscape he is so good as to intend to bestow on me."

In another of Mrs. Montagu's letters, written from Sandleford, in September, he says: "This year we had not any fine weather till the month of September, which from its commencement to its present conclusion has been perfectly delightful; I always think it the most delightful of the year: the labours of the spring and summer accomplished, and the hopes of the farmer fulfilled, the birds have brought up their young, the bee has gathered his honey, and the industrious ant has laid up her store for her winter provision, the trees have produced their fruits, the robin redbreast sings the vespers of the year, and sweetens the serenity of the scene to the contemplative philosopher, while he wanders around

it. A favourable harvest was never more important than at this time ; it promises relief to the poor and discourages those democrats who had hoped scarcity would excite insurrection. I hope this seasonable relief from apprehended evils will make the people more pious to their God, from whom they have received such mercies and benefits."

Early in October, Beattie returned to Aberdeen ; and, during the winter, Mr. Glennie again assisted him in his College duties.

There are few letters of any interest. Dr. Crawford, Presbyterian clergyman in the north of Ireland, writes : " Though I have not the honour of your personal acquaintance, from the knowledge I have of your highly respectable character, I venture to take the liberty of addressing you on a subject of great importance to the Presbyterians of this country. Since their first settlement in Ireland they had been quite destitute of a respectable seminary for the education of their youth. A favourable conjuncture of circumstances has induced our Government to open to them a fair prospect of being freed from this great want and inconvenience. The ministry and leading members of Parliament propose to establish in the north of Ireland for their use an institution vested with all the powers and privileges of an University. As it is of great importance that every matter respecting this interesting object be settled on a proper footing, I am to request, in the name of the General Synod of Ulster, that you will be so very good as to have a copy taken of the charter, statutes and regulations for the internal government of your College, and transmit it to me."

1796.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MONTAGU BEATTIE'S DEATH.

Montagu Beattie's death—Intimation of his death to Sir William Forbes by his father—Letters from Mr. Arbuthnot, the Bishop of London, and Mrs. Montagu—Effect of his son's death on Beattie—Principal Campbell's death—Beattie's Letters to Dr. Laing and Mrs. Montagu—Goes to Edinburgh—Letter to Mr. Arbuthnot—Spends the Summer at Peterhead—Letter from Mrs. Montagu—Mr. Glennie appointed his Assistant and Successor—Letter to Dr. Laing—Account of James Hay Beattie and his Writings published in the "Perth Encyclopædia"—Beattie's care of the accuracy of the Editions of his own Work—Letter from the Duchess of Gordon.

AFTER the death of his elder son, Beattie's chief interest in life centred in his remaining child Montagu, whose bright and affectionate nature endeared him to every one who knew him, and did much to cheer and help his father in his struggle to bear up against the bad health, sorrow and constant anxiety which now depressed him.¹

But of this interest and consolation he was suddenly deprived by Montagu's death, after an illness of five days, on the 14th of March of this year. On the same day, Beattie wrote to Sir William Forbes, to whom he had confided all his hopes and plans for Montagu's future, having appointed him one of his guardians in the event of his own death, and in touchingly simple words told him of his great loss.

"ABERDEEN,

"*March 14th, 1796.*

"Our plans relating to Montagu are all at an end. I am sorry to give you the pain of being informed that he died this morning at five. His disorder was a fever, from which at first we had little apprehension; but it cut him off in five days. He himself thought from the beginning that it would be fatal, and before the delirium came on, spoke with great composure and Christian piety of his approaching dissolution; he even gave some directions about his funeral. The delirium was very violent and continued till within a few

¹ The anxiety arose from the constant dread in which he now lived, as to what his father-in-law might do or permit his daughter to do. Dr. Dun's behaviour at this time Beattie charitably attributed to his falling into his dotage (he was now upwards of eighty); but, though this excused him from blame, he could not but feel even more alarm by supposing that Dr. Dun was scarcely more accountable for his actions than his daughter, the care of whom he assumed.

minutes of his death, when he was heard to whisper the Lord's Prayer, and began an unfinished sentence, of which nothing could be heard but the words *incorruptible glory*. Pious sentiments prevailed in his mind through life and did not leave him till death; nor then, I trust, did they leave him. Notwithstanding the extreme violence of his fever, he seemed to suffer little pain in body or in mind, and as his end drew near, a smile settled upon his countenance. I need not tell you that he had every attention that skilful and affectionate physicians could bestow. I give you the trouble to notify this event to Mr. Arbuthnot. I would have written to him, but have many things to attend to, and but indifferent health. However, I heartily acquiesce in the dispensations of Providence, which are all good and wise. God bless you and your family.

"He will be much regretted, for wherever he went he was a very popular character."

Mr. Arbuthnot, on hearing of his friend's great sorrow, wrote at once :—

"Sir William Forbes informed me of your son's death, an event as melancholy as unexpected, and which must very sensibly affect every person who was acquainted with himself, or who knows you. Many severe trials you have undergone, and though I believe nobody possesses more sensibility—more than I doubt is good for you—yet you have shown there is no distress but what patience can assuage, and piety in some degree overcome. God knows, all the boasted consolations of philosophy are vain and impotent, compared to those which are administered by religion. You have, besides, the greatest of all consolations, the reflection of having in every sense of the word done your duty to those who are the objects of our grief, a comfort which it is not in the power of the world either to give or to take away. Sir William and I think you should leave Aberdeen and come here for some time, the sooner the better. The change of situation and meeting with friends sincerely attached to you would, I am well persuaded, alleviate your distress, and prove in many respects satisfactory and agreeable to you. . . . I hope you will not hesitate on coming to Edinburgh. 'Tis not to be wondered at that I should be anxious to see the few friends who remain to me : I am now far advanced *in the vale of years*, and I doubt with some of the weaknesses and infirmities that generally attend that period. . . . You and I have known each other very long, nor do I think our friendship or our intimacy has ever been diminished or interrupted by any folly or ill temper on either side, at least as far as I know. I believe I remember the very day, and at what time of day, we became first acquainted."

Dr. Porteus and Mrs. Montagu, to whom Montagu's death was a personal sorrow, wrote to his father.

FROM THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

"LONDON HOUSE,
"March 27th, 1796.

"I can scarce recollect a time when I have been more surprised and afflicted than at the receipt of your last letter. It is indeed a sad and most dismal event, and both Mrs. Porteus and myself most cordially sympathise with you in your loss and in your grief. At the same time there are circumstances in the case which give no small consolation to our minds. The faith, the piety, the fortitude, displayed by so young a man, on so awful an occasion, do infinite credit to him, and must afford the highest satisfaction to you. And it is with no less pleasure I observe the composure and resignation with which you support this great calamity. It shows in the strongest light the power of Christian principle over the mind, and it shows also from what source this excellent and amiable young man derived those virtues which adorned his short life and dignified his premature death."

FROM MRS. MONTAGU.

"March 21st, 1796.

"The sad event your letter imparted, has thrown my mind into a state very unable to offer any consolation. I write merely to assure you of my most tender sympathies. The loss to us is great indeed; to him the change from this world to heavenly bliss is of infinitely greater advantage, and it will heighten his felicity to find in the society of angels many blessed spirits whom your doctrines have conducted to the regions of eternal happiness."

Sir William Forbes says, in his "Life of Beattie," that the death of his only surviving child "completely unhinged" his mind. The expression seems to imply more than Sir William can have meant. To God's will he strove to give a hearty acquiescence, not merely a dull or sullen resignation, and this could not have been done by one whose mind was "completely unhinged." Sir William cites as a symptom of this complete mental failure that, shortly after Montagu's death, Beattie often forgot entirely what had become of his son, and, after searching every room in the house for him, would come to his niece and say: "You may think it very strange, but I must ask you if I have a son, and where he is?" A reference to Montagu's sufferings in his last illness, however, always brought back his recollection; and this temporary failure of memory, of which he was quite conscious and regarding which he wrote to his friends, in time passed off. Had his health been such as to make it possible for him to resume his studies and other avocations, there can be no doubt that, whatever it cost him, he would have done it; but, before Montagu's

death he was almost completely incapacitated for any great exertion, either mental or bodily, and, after it, he failed more gradually. Still, for nearly two years after this, his account-book bears witness to his careful personal superintendence of his affairs, noted down in the beautiful clear penmanship for which he was remarkable.

How clearly he saw God's mercies in his afflictions is shown by his oft-repeated expressions of thankfulness, though mingled with many tears, that he had no child, rather than that either of his children had inherited their mother's malady. "How could I have borne to see their elegant minds mangled with madness!"

By a curious coincidence, his friend, Principal Campbell, whose life had been despaired of at the time of James Hay's death, became violently ill shortly after Montagu's, and died in the beginning of April, after a week's illness. Of this event Beattie writes to Dr. Laing:—

"ABERDEEN,

"April 10th.

"I wished to answer your kind letter as soon as I received it, but the very interesting and painful suspense I was kept in by Dr. Campbell's illness disqualified me from writing and everything else. His illness was so violent that, considering his age and enfeebled state and some other disorder which I knew he was afflicted with, I did not at first imagine that he could live two days. To the surprise of everybody, however, he held out almost a week, though unable to speak, and for a great part of the time delirious. His death at last was easy, and he died as he had ever lived, a sincere Christian; we yesterday paid our last duties to his remains. He and I were friends for about thirty-eight years, without any interval of coldness or dissatisfaction. His instructive and cheerful conversation was one of the greatest blessings of my life. I shall cherish the remembrance of it with gratitude to the Giver of all good as long as I live. His death was looked for, and by himself much desired. Montagu's came upon me in a different manner. His delirium, which was extremely violent, ended in such a state of apparent tranquillity that I was congratulating myself on the danger being over, at the very time that Dr. ——— came and told me in his own name and in that of the other two physicians that attended Montagu, that he could not live many hours. This was at eleven at night, and he died at five next morning. I hope I am resigned, as my duty requires, and as I wish to be; but I have passed many a bitter hour, though on these occasions nobody sees me. I fear my reason is a little disordered, for I have sometimes thought of late, especially in a morning, that Montagu is not dead, though I seem to have the remembrance of a dream that he is. This, you will say, what I myself believe, is a symptom not uncommon in cases similar to mine, and that I ought by all means to go from home as soon as I

can. I am much obliged to the kind friends who sympathise with me. Montagu was indeed very popular wherever he went. His death was calm, resigned, and unaffectedly pious; he thought himself dying from the first attack of his illness. 'I could wish,' said he, 'to live to be old, but am neither afraid nor unwilling to die.'

To Mrs. Montagu he wrote thanking her for her letter, "so full of kindness and sympathy," and adds that he hopes "time and recollection will give some strength to my faculties and restore to me the power of commanding my thoughts. . . . My son Montagu sleeps in his brother's grave, the depth of which allows sufficient room for both. The inscription I have enlarged a little; its only merit is its simplicity and truth."

As his friends had urged and his physicians advised, Beattie went to Edinburgh as soon as he felt at all able; but his visit was not productive of all the good hoped from it; yet, on his return home, he wrote to Mr. Arbuthnot with a firmer hand than he had of late been able to command, though he says: "From my journey to Edinburgh and the visits I made there, I learned that I had left home too soon, and before I could endure either the bustle of company or the labour of travelling. As soon as the weather becomes tolerable (it is tempestuous at present—May 14th) I propose to attempt a journey to Peterhead, though it should employ two days, as considering the road I fear it will, and remain there till my mind has recovered a little strength. Home I must leave at any rate, for here many things force themselves upon my notice continually, which it is impossible for me to attend to with composure."

About the middle of June he went to Peterhead, and remained there till the end of August.

In a letter, Mrs. Montagu expresses her great regret that Beattie, accompanied by his niece, had been unable to come on from Edinburgh to Sandleford; and, in the same letter, she speaks of her approval of the arrangement he had made in regard to his College duties. This arrangement was the appointment of Mr. Glennie as his assistant and successor in the chair of Moral Philosophy and Logic. It was still his intention to do the duties of his office when able, but an assistant was now indispensable; and it was better for the students and himself that, having found one whom, after several years' trial, he considered suitable for the office, he should secure his services permanently. This seems to have been settled soon after Montagu's death, as, on May 28th, Beattie was officially informed that the warrant for Mr. Glennie's appointment had been procured from the Secretary of State's office.

Beattie depicts his own state of mind in the autumn of this year to his friend Dr. Laing, who had sent him a cheering and stimulating letter some little time after he had left Peterhead :—

“ ABERDEEN,

“ *October 20th, 1796.*

“ I am much obliged to you for your good letter, of the truth and force of every part of which I am perfectly sensible, and if I live a little while longer I hope my way of thinking and acting will prove that your advice is not thrown away. But this cannot be all at once, as you very well know. Every book that I look at, everything that draws my attention, produces recollections which are not all painful, indeed, but have a sort of debilitating influence upon the mind that may be more easily conceived than described. If I could go about, as I once did, it would make matters much easier, for ever since I remember anything, the external appearances of Nature have been wonderfully soothing to my mind; but this unconquerable vertigo disqualifies me, in a great measure, for that sort of amusement. Music was another great relief to me in former times, and the more so from my having attended to the theory as well as practice of the art, but I cannot now endure the sound of it, no more than of those compositions in prose or verse which greatly affect me by their simplicity or grandeur. I have been endeavouring lately to read some of our fashionable novels, which are all utterly destitute not only of grandeur and simplicity, but even of sense, and were their folly similar to that of children I should no doubt be amused with it; but theirs is the folly, not of children, but of idiots, and, what is worse, of affected idiots, and in me gives rise to nothing but intense disgust. Do not think I am become a misanthrope, or that I am determined not to be pleased; Virgil and Addison and other good authors please me as much as ever, perhaps more than ever, but it is a pleasure which affects me so much that I cannot for any length of time indulge in it.”

There are two letters in the end of this year from Mr. Alexander Aitchison, who was then editing the “Perth Encyclopædia,” in which he was to introduce a notice of James Hay and his works. Beattie sent him a copy of his Memoir of his son to assist him in the compilation of his articles; for which Mr. Aitchison thanks him and says he shall certainly submit to his inspection “anything I shall draw up from the introductory part of it respecting our departed friend.”¹

There is a letter from the Duchess of Gordon, of which the date

¹ Mr. Aitchison had been a personal friend of James Hay. He published several articles in the “Encyclopædia” on James Hay and his writings.

is very uncertain,¹ but it seems to belong to this year. The object of the letter was to tell him of the engagement of her daughter Louisa to the only son of the Marquis of Cornwallis, which she "takes the first moment" to inform him of; and, after giving him an account of the rest of her family, from which she says, "you see I still flatter myself neither the political world nor the gay one is so interesting as the history of me and mine," she continues: "I wish I could tell you anything pleasing as to public matters, but I am sorry to say they are rather gloomy, though not so bad as the world represents. The Archduke has the greatest hopes of beating Bonaparte, and Mr. Pitt is still the favourite of the thinking part of mankind, and as much respected as Mr. Fox is dreaded; he will get his money and remain First Minister, as I know both town and country wish. Have you no commands for me? Any young friend you wish to provide for? My amusement is to get commissions and places for unprovided countrymen. All my family beg to be remembered to you."

¹ Contrary to her general habit, the Duchess gives a date to her letter, March 31st, 1776. This, from the contents of the letter, is manifestly wrong; it is probably a mistake for 1796, and seems written from London.

1797.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BEATTIE'S UNABATED INTEREST IN THE YOUNG.

Records of the year scanty—Beattie's interest in others, particularly in the young, though done with the world for himself—His Niece's marriage with Mr. Glennie, after which Mr. and Mrs. Glennie accompany Beattie to Peterhead—Letters to and from the Duchess of Gordon—Letter to Mrs. Montagu—Letters from Mr. Wilberforce—Letter to Mr. Alexander Fraser Tytler, afterwards Lord Woodhouselee.

THE records of this year, though scanty, are sufficient to show that Beattie, although, on looking for the last time on Montagu before his coffin was closed, he had exclaimed, "I have now done with the world!" had not meant this in the sense of being done with the duties of the world, but simply with any aims or objects connected with the world for himself.

That he never seems to have attempted to engage in any fresh literary work, may be well accounted for by seemingly constant vertigo, which often incapacitated him for continuous thought, and by the growing inability to write from his hand being crippled by rheumatism. But of his readiness, now as ever, to help any one to whom he could do a kindness, and of his keen interest in all that concerned the welfare of his friends, there is ample proof; while the entries in his account book show that now, having no longer to provide for the future of his sons, his gifts and his charities became more frequent and of larger amount. Sir William Forbes, indeed, relates that it was said of him by his family, that at no time did any suppliant, to Beattie's knowledge, go from his door unsatisfied. Another trait that had distinguished him through life was his desire to help the young and to make them welcome in his house. Now, when less able to have young men about him, his friend Dr. Laing's young daughters were often with him. In an early letter of this year, their father writes to Beattie: "I have often been under great obligations to you in many respects, but the kind countenance you show my children is a benefit and pleasure that excites in them and in me a very particular degree of gratitude." Beattie's reply to this was: "Say nothing about your young people; I am always happy to see them in my house, and the oftener the better."

In the agreement between Dr. Beattie and his assistant successor, Mr. Glennie, it had been stipulated that during the session Mr. Glennie should live with Dr. Beattie as a member of his family. Miss Valentine regretted this arrangement, as depriving her uncle

and herself of their privacy ; but in time her regret vanished, and, after the close of the session, with her uncle's full approval, she became Mrs. Glennie. Often, in after years, she remarked to her family, that what she had considered a misfortune had become to Dr. Beattie, as well as to herself, a great blessing, inasmuch as without Mr. Glennie's assistance she could not have cared for her uncle during the last sad years of his life as she was enabled to do.

After their wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Glennie accompanied Dr. Beattie to Peterhead, where, however, he was not able to go till the 14th of July. They remained there till the 5th of October.

During his stay at Peterhead, Beattie had written to the Duchess of Gordon, begging an introduction for a young friend in Calcutta to Lord Cornwallis, who, he believed, was about to sail to India.

The Duchess replied :—

"THE BURN,
"Monday, August 27th.

"Every step as I advanced to the Grampians added to my hopes of once more seeing you, my dear sir. They tell me you are at Peterhead, and I hope when you return you will come and see me in these wild scenes such as you admire. I most truly rejoice to hear you have made an agreeable addition to your family, and that Miss Valentine has made so good a choice. Nobody is more respected than Mr. Glennie's brother¹ near London, and I hope she will be rewarded for all her kindness to you by enjoying every happiness this world can bestow. Have you ever been here ? It is a creation of Lord Adam's ; Nature has done much, and he has only made it comfortable, without robbing it of one beauty. The house is most excellent, and rocks, woods, and torrents in great perfection ; but to me they awaken a thousand painful ideas, they heighten every feeling of the mind ; and as mine is dark and gloomy as the grave, these dark, brown mountains and solemn scenes, though most delightful, are not good for me at present.

"Lord Cornwallis does not go to India. I gave him your letter, and he felt happy to hear he could oblige anybody protected by you. I have not the name of your friend, but if you will give me his direction and wishes, I will send it to Lord Mornington, who goes soon " (to India).

Beattie, in his reply, says that the young man for whom he had asked the introduction was Mr. James Fraser, son of Mr. Fraser of Kirktown, and nephew of the Dowager Lady Saltoun, and that he was interested in him partly on account of his own merit and "my respect for his relations, and partly because he was a favourite of my son James. He went out as a writer to Calcutta two years

¹ Dr. William Glennie, at whose academy at Dulwich Lord Byron was educated for a short time.

ago, and his friends are unanimously of opinion that an introduction from your Grace to Lord Mornington would be of the greatest advantage to him." Of himself, Beattie says in this letter : "Since the death of my two sons I had abstained wholly from my favourite, and indeed my only amusement, music ; not out of peevishness or dissatisfaction, but because my shattered nerves could not endure the sound of it. But since I came to Peterhead in July last I have been endeavouring to renew my acquaintance with the organ and violincello, and think myself the better of it ; though I am sorry to find my right hand has almost forgot it cunning. But my voice I seem to have lost entirely, so that in this world it is not probable that I shall sing any more."

In December, in reply to a letter of inquiry about his health from Mrs. Montagu, he gives a sad account of his increasing illness and infirmities, to which, indeed, his handwriting bears witness, at the same time that he gratefully acknowledges the comforts that are left him. In this connexion, he mentions the satisfaction his niece's marriage gave him. Mr. Glennie he characterises as a "young man of sense and learning, a preacher, and both as a divine and philosopher, of sound sense and steady principles," and says of him, "he has been my particular friend for many years. He was also the particular and, indeed, intimate friend of both my sons. Mr. and Mrs. Glennie live in my family, which I hope will long continue to be agreeable to all parties."

There are two letters from Mr. Wilberforce. In the first, dated January 6th, he says : "A particular friend of mine, in passing through Scotland last summer, picked up an odd volume in which were memoirs of a young man which, in themselves in the highest degree interesting, were rendered (if the hibernian (!) may be pardoned) still more so to me by the circumstances of their being the memoirs of *your* son authenticated by his father. Half only of the account my friend brought away, and I have since been often wishing for the remainder. After a little reflection I have determined to apply to you to gratify my impatience. The only objection to my doing so which occurred to me, was its possibly appearing like one of the *compliments* of the season. But when I assure you that I have told you the simple truth, I trust you will believe me ; and I must also add that it gives me pleasure to recollect that I have had the honour of your acquaintance, and thus to lay in my claim for any opportunity which may present itself to me of cultivating it."

The second letter was one of thanks for a copy of the "Memoir and Writings of James Hay Beattie," which was Beattie's reply to the first. In it, Wilberforce assures Beattie that the book "will possess a distinguished place in my library, and be preserved as a memorial of the kind regard with which I have been honoured by you."

To Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, Beattie wrote on May 15th thanking him for the "much-esteemed present of the new edition of your 'Principles of Translation.' As yet I have read it only once; but I read it with much attention and great pleasure as well as instruction. I am astonished at the variety of your examples, which prove you must have thought long and deeply on the subject; and I am convinced that your work will be very acceptable to the learned world, and very useful. Great taste, as well as learning, appears in every part of it. I must thank you in particular for the very favourable manner in which I have the honour to be quoted in it; for your very elegant compliment to my son I have thanked you, and I still thank you with my tears. Had he lived to see your book, I know it would have given him much pleasure, for I have often heard him speak on the subject, and in terms which perfectly coincided with your sentiments.

"A judicious critic everybody must acknowledge you to be, and yet you are very merciful, especially to Cowley and Dryden. This last frequently burlesques Virgil. Whether he intended it, I know not; if he did not intend it, he must have been very little of a scholar. But who is equal to the task of translating Virgil? Nobody, I will venture to say, will ever attempt such a task—who is equal to it? I formerly attempted some parts of him, but it was at a time when I understood him very superficially indeed. There is one translation which I greatly admire, but I am sure you never saw it, as you have not mentioned it; the book is indeed very rare; I obtained it with difficulty, by the friendship of Tom Davis, an old English bookseller. I mean Dobson's 'Paradisus Amissus.' My son studied and, I believe, read every word of it. It is more true to the original, both in sense and spirit, than any other poetical version of length that I have seen. The author must have had an amazing command of Latin phraseology, and a very nice ear in harmony."¹

¹ This letter is published in Sir William Forbes's Life, and a long Latin quotation from this translation is given.

1798.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LAST LETTERS.

Last entry in Beattie's account book—Mrs. Montagu's last letter preserved in the correspondence—Letter from the Rev. Colin Gillies, asking leave to get a cheap edition of Beattie's "Evidences of Christianity" printed—Letter from Mr. Fraser with message from the Bishop of London—Memoir of James Hay given to the public—Mr. Sylvester Douglas publishes the poems of his brother-in-law Major Mercer.

DURING this year, Beattie's health failed rapidly; his vertigo became even more violent, and his sight and memory were much impaired. His account book, in which hitherto ample information had been supplied of the dates and routes of his excursions, besides of their expense, now fails us.

Of letters written by himself there are but two preserved, and both are given in Sir William Forbes's Life. There is no trace in them of mental failure. In the first, to Dr. Laing, he writes of and criticises "a little Treatise by a man proposing an improvement in the art of Music," and also a new edition of the works of Pope, by Dr. Joseph Warton. The other, to Sir William, was as follows:—

"PETERHEAD,

"August 3rd, 1798.

"I am acquainted with many parts of your excursion through the North of England, and am very glad you had my old friend Mr. Gray's Letters with you, which are indeed so well written that I have no scruple to pronounce them the best letters that have been printed in our language. Lady Mary Montagu's letters are not without merit, but are too artificial and affected to be confided in as true; Lord Chesterfield's have much greater faults, indeed, some of the greatest that letters can have; but Gray's letters are always sensible, and of classical conciseness and perspicuity. They very much resemble what his conversation was. He had none of the airs of either a scholar or a poet; and though on those and all other subjects he spoke to me with the utmost freedom and without any reserve, he was in general company much more silent than one could have wished. Have you seen Mr. Pinkerton's new 'History of the Jameses of Scotland'? The author, with whom I was acquainted in London about fifteen years ago, has sent me a copy of it, but my dizzy head will not yet permit me to read it. He is a Scotchman and speaks with a strong Edinburgh accent, at least he did so

formerly. There are two quartos with a striking likeness of the author prefixed. He seems to abound too much in our new-fashioned English, but I cannot yet take it upon me to criticise his work."

Among the letters received by Beattie this year, the first place must be given to that of his faithful correspondent and affectionate friend, Mrs. Montagu, as it is perhaps the last she ever wrote to him, certainly the last preserved.

"SANDLEFORD,
"September 10th, 1798.

"MY VALUABLE AND DEAR FRIEND,

"The sad condition of my eyes in spring and a fever in the summer obliged me to defer till now my inquiries after your health. The rumours of an invasion made me delay making my retreat to Sandleford at my usual time, and I was afterwards visited by a fever, which reduced me to a weak and languid condition, from which I am but lately recovered. My dear nephew, Montagu, his amiable wife, and nine lovely children form a circle around me which would make me very happy if the public state of things did not disturb domestic tranquillity; I will not dwell on this subject. My weak eyes admonish me not to add anything more to my letter than my request that you would send me a particular account of your health, etc. With the most affectionate respects of my friends here, and with most perfect esteem and affection,

"I am, ever yours,

"E. MONTAGU."

A letter from the Rev. Colin Gillies,¹ Paisley, a minister of the Church of Scotland, begins with an acknowledgment of his own indebtedness to Beattie's "Essay on Truth": "It is many years since the writer of this letter first read your 'Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth' with so much pleasure and edification as might offend your modesty fully to express, but must gladden your pious and benevolent mind to know, was produced by the blessing of God on your labours, even with respect to a humble individual."

He then expresses his thankfulness that, since writing that work, Beattie had been spared "to favour the world with many other useful productions." Amongst these, his attention had "been lately fixed in particular on your 'Evidences of Christianity,'"—a book which appears to him just such a work as he has been in search of to circulate "amongst the lower ranks of people for their comfort and edification, through the Divine blessing, amidst the deplorable infidelity and licentiousness of the present age."

But its price forbids this general circulation, and he writes to beg

¹ Dilly informed Beattie that he believed Mr. Gillies was a brother of Dr. Gillies, the historian of Greece.

that, as the book has run through four "elegant" editions, it may now be printed in a cheap form. Beattie replied he had no objection provided the booksellers, to whom he had sold the copyright, gave their consent.

Mr. H. Fraser writes from Fraserfield, near Aberdeen:¹ "I have just received from the Bishop of London a letter, part of which I take the liberty of sending you the following transcript: 'If Dr. Beattie is at Aberdeen, be so good as to call upon him and ask him whether he received a letter from me lately. If he has I should be glad to hear from him, both to have some account of his health and also to know whether he has any objection to the design I mentioned to him.'"

We have no certainty as to what "design" the Bishop alludes to; but it, probably, was that of giving to the public the Memoir and Works of his son along with another edition of his own poems. This the Bishop advised, in consequence of finding that an unauthorised copy of the Memoir and Works had been issued, taken from the small edition of a hundred copies, which Beattie had intended merely for circulation among his friends. Whether this was so or not, this publication, we learn from a letter of Dilly's, was now resolved upon.

Mr. Sylvester Douglas sends him a copy of his brother-in-law, Major Mercer's poems, which he had edited and published without the author's leave, and against his opinion, adding: "I will not say anything on the merits of the poetry to one who is so great a master of the practice and the theory of the art, but I am persuaded that if any partiality has led me to an opinion of its excellence beyond the truth, even your superior judgment will not be entirely free from a similar bias."

¹ Beattie had introduced Mr. Fraser, a young clergyman of the Church of England, to the Bishop of London. In this letter, he hopes that as Beattie has returned from Peterhead, he may "have the pleasure of expressing to you in person how much I feel myself indebted to you."

1799.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LAST YEARS.

False report of Mrs. Montagu's death, and remarks—Letter from Mr. Arbuthnot—First stroke of paralysis—New Edition of "Minstrel" and James Hay's Poetical Works in two small volumes—Miss Harriet Bowdler's Letter—Letter from Mr. Peter Wilson, a former student.

In the beginning of this year, a false report of Mrs. Montagu's death¹ reached Beattie. Of what he felt towards her he writes to Dr. Laing :—

"ABERDEEN,
" *March 7th*, 1799.

"I have just now heard, by the post of this day, a piece of news that affects me very much; the death of my excellent friend Mrs. Montagu. Her age was not less than fourscore, so that on this point she is not to be regretted. But many people depended on her; and to me on all occasions, ever since 1771, when I first became acquainted with her, she has been a faithful and affectionate friend, especially in seasons of distress and difficulty. You will not wonder, then, that her death afflicts me. For some time past a failure in her eyes had made writing very painful to her, but for not less than twenty years she was my punctual correspondent. She was greatly attached to Montagu, who received his name from her, and not less interested in my other son, and in everything that related to my family. I need not tell you what an excellent writer she was; you must have seen her book on Shakespeare, as compared with the Greek and French dramatic writers. I have known several ladies eminent in literature, but she excelled them all; and in conversation she had more *wit* than any other person, male or female, whom I have known. These, however, were her slighter accomplishments; what was infinitely more to her honour, she was a sincere Christian, both in faith and practice, and took every proper opportunity to show it, so that by her example and influence she did much good. I knew her husband, who died in extreme old age in the year 1775, and by her desire had conferences with him on the subject of Christianity; but to her great concern he set too much value on mathematical evidence, and piqued himself too much on his knowledge on that science. He took it into his head, too, that I was a mathematician, though I was at a great deal of pains to convince him of the contrary."

¹ She did not die till the following year.

About the same time as this was written, Beattie had a long letter from Mr. Arbuthnot, in which he speaks of his own failing health and that of Sir William Forbes. Of himself he says, that owing to a persistent cough, which however he hopes he may lose in summer, he is in the meantime obliged to confine himself very much to the house, "nor do I ever go abroad except to pay a visit to Sir William Forbes, which I do once or twice every week, although generally in a carriage or a chair. I am sorry I cannot give you very favourable accounts of our worthy friend, for although his health is certainly upon the whole better than it was in autumn, yet I am afraid the cause of his distemper is far from being removed. . . . When I visit him we are always left by ourselves, and as the subjects of our conversations are for the most part very interesting to us both, it has a very good effect and produces very good spirits in him. He never has an idle or a vacant moment, but is always employed, very often on account of his friends, to whom he is as willing and ready to do good and kind offices as when he was in full possession of his health ; and his judgment continues as sound, and his understanding and memory as correct, as ever. . . . He frequently mentions you, and always with regard and affection.

"That Major Mercer's company and conversation should afford you great comfort I can easily believe, nor will his visits be the less frequent that the state of your health and spirits stand in need of them. I have been long and intimately acquainted with him, and I declare I never knew a human being on whose friendship, on the day of adversity or distress, I could have greater dependence than on Mercer's."

As to Beattie himself, Mr. Arbuthnot exhorts him "not to indulge a disposition to despondency, but still to hope for better health. You have experienced greater trials than bodily ailments, and sustained them with magnanimity and resignation, nor have I any doubt but you will continue to practise those duties which you know so well."

But Beattie's own feelings were the true index of his state, and justified his hopelessness as to improvement in his health. Very shortly after, in the beginning of April, he had his first stroke of paralysis. By it his speech was for some time much affected, but he rallied, and in the last letter we have written by himself, we find him striving to arrange his plans for the summer, and to treat of other matters as in former days, though the handwriting betrays the effort it must have cost him physically ; and, in the letter, he acknowledges his mental failure: "since the illness which I had in March (or April) I have been very deficient in many of my faculties, and hardly able to manage my own affairs, trifling as they are."¹ Of

¹ The letter was addressed to Dr. Laing arranging about lodgings for himself and Mr. and Mrs. Glennie at Peterhead, and is dated July 8th, 1799.

other matters he says: "Mr. Charles Dilly, who is fond of illustrating his books with cuts, and who is just now employed in printing a new edition of the 'Minstrel,' and of my son's poetical things, in two small volumes, has got a head of my son very well engraved by Heath, and I have just received a copy of it in a frank. Dilly wished to have other prints in this book, but my bad health made me unable to contrive them."

There are but few letters remaining in the correspondence. Of these, two may be mentioned.

In this year, Miss Harriet Bowdler,¹ writing from Bath, sends her thanks for a copy of the Memoir of James Hay, and adds: "The hour I once had the happiness in spending in your company has made a deep impression on my mind, and the sentiments you then expressed, when speaking of your recent loss,² make this publication particularly interesting. I have often reflected on the lesson I then learned from you, though it pleased God to spare the life for which I was then most anxious, and after eight years' absence I hope now to see my sister return to England in tolerable health."

In the following year, there is a letter from an old student, a Mr. Peter Wilson, thanking Beattie for the kindness he had received from him at College, and giving his own history from the time of his going to America in 1765, a youth of seventeen, "without experience, without friends, and without funds," till the time he writes in 1800. Beginning as an assistant in a Grammar School in New York, he had afterwards conducted an Academy in the State of New Jersey, and was now Professor of Languages, and Greek and Roman Antiquities, in Columbia College, New York.

There is little more to record; for, though Dr. Beattie lived four years after he was first struck by paralysis, they were years of ever failing strength and of repeated returns of the same malady. By the last of these strokes, which occurred in October, 1802, he was completely deprived of the power of motion; and in this condition he remained till the 18th of August, 1803, when he passed peacefully away.

It was during these last sad years that, as one day, leaning on Mrs. Glennie's arm, Beattie was going feebly along the street, a stranger met him, paused, and after Beattie had passed, was heard to repeat the first two lines of the second part of the "Minstrel"—

"Of chance or change O let not man complain,
Else shall he never, never cease to wail."

The other incident of those days that comes down to us shows how keen his feelings were to those he loved till the last. A little

¹ Sister of Miss Jane Bowdler, who published a volume of Poems and Essays, and herself author of "Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity," published anonymously.

² The death of James Hay.

child of Mrs. Glennie was baptized at his bedside, and, when she was given the name of Mary,¹ Beattie burst into tears: it was his wife's name.

Of letters from his friends written on hearing of his death from Mr. Glennie, two are preserved—one from the Bishop of London, and the other from the Duchess of Gordon.²

FROM THE BISHOP OF LONDON TO MR. GLENNIE.

"FULHAM,

"August 23rd, 1803.

"I lose no time in expressing to you my sincere concern for the loss of my old and most amiable friend Dr. Beattie. His talents, especially as a poet, were of the first class, his religious principles sound, and his temper and disposition such as endeared him to every one that knew him. I take a large share in your grief."

FROM THE DUCHESS OF GORDON TO MR. GLENNIE.

"KENRARA COTTAGE,

"September 4th, 1803.

"Though we had nothing to hope when we parted, yet the black seal and the Aberdeen postmark gave me a sensation you can feel, though I cannot describe it. At this time of the year, and in the happiest days of my eventful life, he used to come to Gordon Castle. He not only enjoyed the gay scenes, but was the gayest of the gay. That voice I shall never hear again still vibrates in my memory, and I often draw a picture of him, surrounded by my children, playing his violoncello with that benign countenance that gave one an idea of that heaven he came to defend, and where he is now surrounded with immortal glory. When I first saw these wild scenes of delight, which possess everything in Nature that is sublime and beautiful, I pleased myself to think how he would admire them. Often did his pen paint to me with the most enthusiastic eloquence the beauties of Dee Castle, and the Den of Rubislaw, etc. He certainly believed that the grave was not a dark and dreadful region of forgetfulness, but that those objects that interested us in this world of care would be revealed as far as would be conducive to our happiness.

"May many an evening sun shine sweetly on his grave."³

"I flatter myself now he sees with what friendship and respect and adoration I valued him in life. His picture and his letters are now doubly dear to me. When envious malignity has thrown out malignant

¹ The writer's mother.

² Of this letter there is only a copy in Dr. Glennie's handwriting.

³ The "Minstrel," Book II., Stanza 17.

reflections that gave me pain, though from the pen of hireling wretches, the reflection that his friendship and approbation, his perfect esteem, followed every action of my life, has blunted my regret and made me despise the envy and malice of the little men. I forget how much of your time I am occupying, but I feel a pleasure in conversing with one who knew Dr. Beattie, loved him as I do, and, indeed, soothed the last moments of a long, long-lingering illness. Assure Mrs. Glennie of my best wishes. I hope you and she will come and visit me in these loved scenes, or at Gordon Castle. I shall always be happy to meet with both, and am much interested in the welfare of your family."

In former days, before the death of his sons, Dr. Beattie had expressed a desire to be laid in the "lone churchyard" of St. Fergus, situated close to the sea shore, three or four miles from Peterhead, but this desire had long passed away, and at his own request he was buried beside his sons in the churchyard of St. Nicholas.

NOTE 1.

There are two graves belonging to Dr. Beattie in St. Nicholas Churchyard. They are situated several yards east of the wall next to the Back Wynd and opposite Little Belmont Street. In the more northern of the two his sons are laid, dying in 1790 and 1796. In the other Dr. Beattie himself is buried, also his wife, his niece (Mrs. Glennie), and Dr. George Glennie, with one of their sons and two of their daughters, the last of whom was laid there in October, 1881.

NOTE 2.

Several of Dr. Beattie's faithful friends who survived him were not long in following him to the grave. Mr. Arbuthnot died on November 5th, 1803; Major Mercer on November 18th, 1804; and Sir William Forbes, shortly after finishing his *Life of Beattie*, in 1806.

APPENDIX.

THE following is a specimen of the kind of squib with which Dr. Beattie amused himself in leisure moments. It is reproduced here from his own manuscript, but it was published in No. 8 of the *Northern Gazette* (a short-lived Aberdeen literary chronicle and review, published by James Chalmers & Co.), dated "Thursday, May 3rd, 1787." It is interesting, as showing how a good many words and phrases that are now regarded as legitimate terms and expressions had not yet established their position, even for the purpose of ordinary conversation or familiar correspondence.

TO THE PRINTER OF THE *Northern Gazette*.

"ABERDEEN,

"April 24th, 1787.

"SIR,—When I was last in London, several years ago, I was one of a club of honest gentlemen, who used to meet on Saturday night at the *Cat and Bagpipes*, near Amen Corner. To this club I had been introduced by my friend, Mr. Nicholas Newfangle, of the *Old Jewry*. He was at that time a citizen of good substance and a fair character; no man kept more regular books, or could be more punctual in answering a letter and executing a commission. But of late I was much surprised to see in his letters some very singular phrases which I did not understand, and could not find either in Bayley's Dictionary or in Johnson's; whereupon I wrote to another member of the club and begged to know what was the matter with my old friend. The answer was somewhat ambiguous (for a merchant's character is, you know, a very delicate thing); however, I could gather from it that Mr. Newfangle had, since the conclusion of the late war, become rather inattentive to business; wore a monstrous large pair of shoe-buckles, and a couple of watches (one in each fob); was continually in the coffee-house, poring on newspapers and political pamphlets; and that all the club had taken notice of a surprising change in his dialect. Notwithstanding this intelligence I continued to write to him occasionally, though not so often as before; but now I am afraid I must drop the correspondence; for his last letter is altogether beyond my comprehension. I showed it the other day

to an English rider, who, on reading it, swore it was *damn'd clever*, and that the gentleman, whoever he was, had a *devilish good pen*. I agreed with him that the handwriting was well enough, and begged, if he understood the letter, that he would read it to me in English. 'In English?' says he. 'Is not this English? Ay, faith, and *tip-top* English too, of the newest and best pattern. I tell you, Sir, it is quite *the thing*;' and he added, rather uncivilly, I think: 'But it can hardly be expected that an Aberdeen hosier should understand the polite language of the metropolis.' I could not help telling him that I had formerly lived seven years in London, and had read many of the best books in the language, had studied grammar and logick too, and was generally allowed to pen as good a letter as my neighbours. '*The Devil you are,*' said he with a sneer—'A Scotchman pen a good letter!'—and left me abruptly. I do not like, my good Sir, to be called *the Devil*; and I cannot imagine why he should give me that title. I have since shown this extraordinary letter to some of my neighbours, and we are all at our wits' end about it. I therefore send it to you, Sir, with a request that you will publish it; and if any learned correspondent of yours will be kind enough to decypher it, I shall willingly allow him on calling at my shop in the Broadgate, a reasonable compensation. I had almost forgot to tell you that the assertion in the beginning is not strictly true; I never made use of the words imputed to me. The rest is to me Greek and Hebrew; but the conclusion is a good joke. He bids me send him two enclosures, and yet he knows I never was master of a rood of land since I was born. And then to desire me to enclose my enclosures in a letter to a member of Parliament because postage is *heavy*!—I fear, I fear, my friend's head is . . . you understand me. This is all needful from

"Worthy Sir,

"Your humble Servant to command till death,

"JONATHAN JOGTROT."

THE LETTER.

"OLD JEWRY, LONDON,
"April 1st, 1787.

"MR. JONATHAN JOGTROT,

"DEAR SIR,—You say the *idea of reform* which you intend to *bring forward* in your country *holds out* great advantages to the community *at large*, as well as to the persons concerned. I would gladly *meet your ideas* and *your wishes*, but, though I own I have not yet *made up my mind* upon the subject, I take the liberty to tell you that, *at the first blush of the business*, it seems to me to be

inimical to that *reciprocity* of interests which has regulated our transactions hitherto, and will, I hope, continue to do so *in future*. An *idea* of the same kind was *scouted* about a year ago, when *brought forward* by a gentleman, whose *line of conduct* is generally thought unexceptionable. Were I now *to meet your arguments*, I should only *go over the same ground* which you know I *went over* long ago, when you favoured me with a *visitation* at the time I was confined to bed by the gout. I laid your remonstrances before the club; but though I was an hour *on my legs* and *went into a variety of matter*, and was very *well heard*, they *set little store* by what I said: in a word, they *negatived* the whole. I have been urgent with Mr. Dolittle to be somewhat more *expeditive* in the *transferral* of the property you mention. I have some character to support among my neighbours, being, as you know, a justice of the peace; and I have told him of my having *committed myself* several times in this affair; but he still puts me off; which must be imputed to his want of *exactitude* in business. You ask many questions about young Sir Squanderbeg Scullrattle; but on *his subject* I am not yet prepared to speak. The report of a fever having put *an end to his existence* was *unfounded*. His father's *idea* was to breed him in *some professional line*; but whether he will be *agreeable to that* I much doubt. At last Newmarket races I hear he *sported* a fine new phaeton and pair.

"You ask for news. I have only to tell you, that some ships have been *captured* in the Mediterranean and that paper currency *on the other side of the water* begins to *depreciate*, and will probably continue to do so, till the present troubles *determine*. A letter from Yarmouth says, that Capt. Blackbeard of the *Devil-to-pay* frigate has *captivated* the *Empress Queen*, a very large vessel, with a rich cargo of muslin and French brandy. There are violent disputes *in the Commons*, but *in the Lords* they seem to acquiesce in everything. Write me soon. Alderman Greenfat also expects a letter. Send both your *enclosures*, postage being now very heavy, under cover to Mr. Ayno, M.P. I am with *the most perfect consideration*, dear Sir,

"Your very humble servant,

"NIO. NEWFANGLE.

"P.S.—Our friend the Alderman tells me, and what he says is commonly *marked with authenticity*, that by a late adventure in the alley he *netted* a *cool three thousand*; but he has lost his wife, and yesterday *sported* *sables* on the occasion.—*A propos*, my dear Sir, why are you not a little more modish in the style of your letters? Lard, Sir, your language has no more *ton* in it than the pedantic and old-fashioned stuff of Addison and Swift. My friend, Sir Giles Gibberish, *had it in contemplation to bring forward* a bill in the

Commons for encouraging the manufacture of new words. But we were told that a great majority in both Houses would be against it, that a certain great Personage, and who is known to be a great admirer of Addison, would be most *inimical* to it, and that it would be reprobated by both the Universities. *O Tim Perry, O Morrice!*—N. N."

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